

Lord Ii Naosuke

and

New Japan

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LORD II NAOSUKÉ

AND

NEW JAPAN

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED

BY

SHUNKICHI AKIMOTO

FROM


II TAIRO TO KAIKŌ

(井伊大老と開港)

BY

✓
KATSUMARO NAKAMURA,
BUNGAKUSHI.

1909.

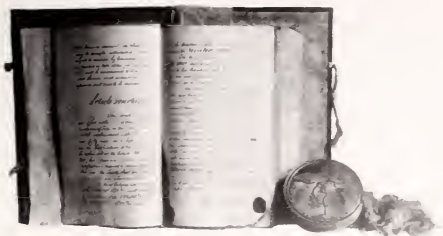


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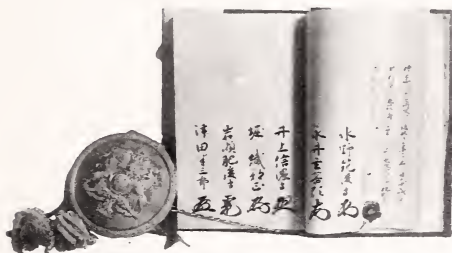


TAIRO II NAOSUKE.

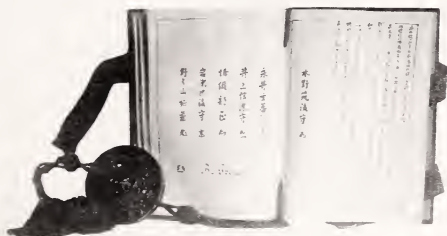
Portrait from life by Yeigaku Kano, in the possession of Kotoku-ji Temple, Setagaya, Tokyo-fu, where Lord li's remains are buried.



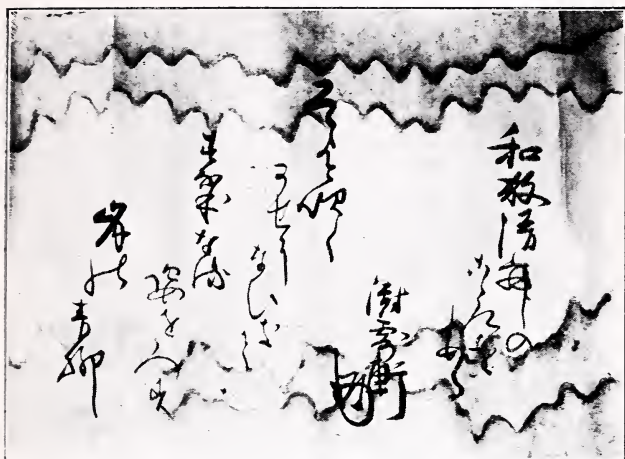
The Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United States of America and the Empire of Japan, signed at Yedo, July 29th, 1858.



That with Great Britain, Aug. 9. 1858.



That with France, Oct. 9, 1858.



The Tairo who was an adept in the mysteries of the mystic tea-ceremonial thus expounds its secrets in thirty-one syllables :—

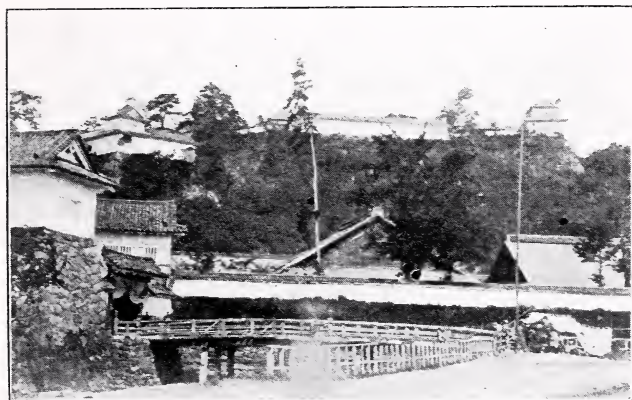
Peace Within and Peace Without.

To softly blowing zephyr bends
 The meek and yielding form that still
 Reflected with the waters blends—
 The willow green that shades the rill!

(Translated by H. Saito.)



Look-out tower, Hikone Castle.



Front view of Hikone Castle.

(Photographed 1876.)

PREFACE.

Mr. Katsumaro Nakamura has compiled a book entitled *Ii Naosuke to Kaiko* (or Ii Naosuke and the opening of ports) to be distributed in commemoration of the unveiling of the statue of the late Ii Kemon-no-Kami, Lord of Hikone to take place in July 1909 at Yokohama.

It would be presumptuous for me to enlarge upon the merits of his work, before it has become public. Yet this much I may say with truth that all the materials and documentary evidence accessible have been taken full advantage of by Mr. Nakamura and that his book throws a new light upon some phases of Lord Ii's life and conduct.

Lord Ii Naosuke hitherto enshrouded in clouds of doubts, whose name was

associated until quite recently with that of traitors and rebels, is now universally revered as that of a great patriot and statesman. The first honour of rescuing this great man from the undeserved obloquy in which he had been buried for about thirty years belongs to Mr. Saburo Shimada, one of our ablest publicists. Since the appearance of his celebrated *Kaikoku Shimatsu*, many new books have come out dealing with the turbulent times of the pre-restoration day, when Lord Ii led the stage in that fierce drama of foreign intercourse agitation. But none has yet added so much lustre to Lord Ii's life made famous by Mr. Shimada's book as this new publication of Mr. Nakamura is destined to do.

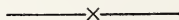
The work of preparing an abridged English version of Mr. Nakamura's book has been entrusted to me. But

the time allowed for it being scarcely over fifteen days, the result cannot but be far from satisfactory. I am obliged not only to leave out the translation of many interesting epistolary documents and poetical effusions of Lord Li, but also to cut short or omit several episodes of considerable interest. Since I have had to finish the work in a great hurry so as to get it ready in time for the auspicious event in July, I fear I shall incur and fully deserve too, the blame of having confounded the unimportant with the important in the process of my abridgement. Beside the exigencies of hasty printing may have occasioned many typographical errors in the book. These imperfections I hope I shall revise as thoroughly as it is in my power when a second edition is brought out for the general public. To meet the

present requirement of distributing the book among the foreign guests at the unveiling ceremony I have to present it as it is, relying upon the force of the proverb that one lame leg is better than none, and would crave the generous indulgence of the readers for the aforesaid imperfections, which must not mislead them as to the undoubted merits of the original.

SHUNKICHI AKIMOTO.

Toyooka. June 25th 1909.



LORD I I NAOSUKE AND NEW JAPAN.

INTRODUCTION.

From old Japan has been fondly called "God's land" and has come through many a perilous crisis, emerged successfully from many awful dilemma, and tasted the bitter experiences of struggles at home and troubles from without. But the hands of the Almighty have ever been upon this blessed isle of Yamato. At each critical period providence has invariably armed her with great heroes and patriots whose foresight and prowess have not only saved the country from the threatened fate but placed her in the right course of advance and civilisation. Of all the emergencies the Empire has ever grappled with the one that thrilled the hearts of the whole nation was that which confronted her at a juncture when the old Japan

passed into the new. It was 56 years ago when Commodore Perry arrived at Uraga and tapped gently but sufficiently firmly to be heard throughout the land, at the sea-gate of Japan, seeking an intercourse of amity and commerce. Japan was then thrown into a chaos of confusion. Pride and prejudice, begotten of ease and ignorance nourished by peace and seclusion of three hundred years, had a rude awakening, and were soon followed by fear and distrust. "Away with the foreigners!" rang through the country. Officials, both high and low, were for the expulsion of the foreigners and shutting all the ports on them. There was one man, however, who said "no" in the person of Ii Naosuke, lord of Hikone. He not only had the courage and foresight to declare himself in favour of opening the country for foreign intercourse but also possessed the intrepidity to carry into operation what he believed to be in the interest of his country by signing the memorable first treaty of amity with America.

He was a man far ahead of the general intelligence of the times.—It is therefore a matter of little wonder that this great man should be grossly misunderstood at the time, stigmatized as a traitor and enemy of Japan; that he fell a victim to the dagger of fanatical advocates of seclusion; and that his name should have long been associated by the common people with all that is ignominious and perfidious until the true light of history dawned and revealed him as one of the greatest, the most courageous and patriotic statesmen that Japan has ever produced. It is of him, —of what he was and had done,—and of what the opening of Japanese ports to foreigners was and signified, that this sketch treats.

CHAPTER I.

SECLUSION POLICY AND
OPENING OF THE
PORTS.

ANTI-FOREIGN FERVOUR.

How well chosen in words and admirably conciliatory in tone was the state message which Commodore Perry presented to the Tokugawa Government half a century ago! It was characterised by oriental brevity, and occidental lucidity, eloquently expressive of the delicate courtesy and friendship with which the United States asked Japan to throw open her gates to foreign intercourse and commerce. This memorable epistle contained a passage the gist of which was as follows:—

The President of the United States entertains sentiments of strong friendship towards your country. He is therefore much grieved to learn whenever Americans visited your shores or were driven to your ports by accident you regarded and treated them

as your enemies. He refers to the usage you gave the crew of the American vessel "Morrison"—. The Americans being no exception to the rule of peoples of Christian nations they treat all nationals with the utmost humanity whenever misfortune drives them to the shores of the United States; and accord the same friendly treatment to your own people.

That the evils of isolation are both manifold and calamitous every Japanese school boy knows to-day. And when it comes to the barbarous conduct of repelling with guns and swords the foreigners who approach us with the best intentions of friendship and amity, we cannot help standing aghast at the brutality of our forefathers of fifty years ago.

Had the foreigners tried to coax our exclusionists of those days into complying with their request in sweet flattering words they might have spurned the advances in contempt, even at the peril of their state; or if these foreigners were peremptory in demand and threatening in attitude,

they might have drawn swords and fought to the last drop of their blood if only to show their Yamato spirit. But here instead of resorting to these ill judged steps the sagacious President appealed to their sense of humanity. They were given the alternative of choosing between being thought a terribly barbarous people and being regarded as an intelligent humane people. They certainly did not like having anything to do with foreigners; but to be called inhuman or uncivilised was the last thing they could tolerate. The exclusionists' crest had fallen, their swords were sheathed. They then began to consider as to what was the best course to choose for preserving the honour and safety of their country. Here was no doubt planted the first germ of the great friendship which has since grown up between the United States and Japan. But for the time being bigotry and prejudice were so deep rooted and universal among them that but a few had the foresight and courage to form correct views regard-

ing the true advantage and welfare of their country.

To illustrate the stubborn bias and blundering ignorance which prevailed among them, I shall here briefly recount how the crew of the "Morrison" were treated, an affair hinted in the President's letter already referred to. About sixteen years before Commodore Perry's mission, the United States seems to have already begun to pay attention to the island people in the Far East, and watched for a chance to open intercourse with them. It came to pass at this time that a small Japanese boat beset by a gale was drifted to an island lying to the north-east of Vancouver. Three Japanese survived the disaster and were seized by the natives of the island, but were fortunately rescued afterwards by an official of a British company and sent over to England. They were subsequently sent to Macao where they enjoyed comfort and protection under the hospitable roof of a missionary named Gutzlaff. Not long after

this four Japanese whom a similar fate had driven to the Philippine islands were brought over to the same place. The luckless Japanese narrated their respective experiences and bewailed their sad fate in company.

It was probable that the Americans staying at Macao at that time were aware of the intentions of their government vis-a-vis Japan. At any rate it was proposed among them that the unfortunate Japanese should be taken back to Japan and that this opportunity be improved on in making of it a handle to open intercourse with that country. An influential merchant called King got ready a sailing vessel named "Morrison" for the purpose of crossing over to Japan. Besides Mr. King and the ship-wrecked Japanese, the ship's passengers comprised Rev. Mr. Gutzlaff, Mr. Parker, a physician and Mr. Williams, a journalist on the staff of the *Chinese Repository* who revisited Japan 16 years after in the suite of Commodore Perry. The "Morrison" arrived at Uruga on the 30th

July, 1837. Quite contrary to their expectation the ship was hailed with a suddenly shower of shot and bullets from the heights on the shore, and so had to leave the harbour and cast anchor out of the range of cannon.

While wonder and surprise were pervading on board the "Morrison" at this unfriendly reception, the people on land were in a state of panic. At the report that a large foreign ship was approaching Uraga, the local magistrates at once issued orders that she should be driven away peremptorily by every possible means, and sent down to the bottom of the sea, if possible. Warlike preparations were set about on all sides.

Meanwhile an innocent interview took place between the crew of the "Morrison" and the fishermen who were engaged in fishing off the coast. They assembled in a large number about the "Morrison," attracted chiefly by curiosity. Some of the bolder fishermen and their wives boarded the vessel and were en-

tertained by her crew with biscuits and wine. They cautiously ate some of the former while they refused to touch the latter. The American visitors handed a piece of paper to the Japanese on which was written Chinese characters which in effect said that they should like to meet some of the local Japanese officials. But the fishermen failed to comprehend their meaning. The Americans then took recourse to gestures, which however, proved equally unavailing. Towards the evening the fishermen took their leave. The next day came and the passengers of the "Morrison" meant to land at Uraga on that day. But even before the sun had risen, the Japanese on the hills began to fire away guns which they trained on the unarmed "Morrison." It was most fortunate that the American ship was unarmed—she had purposely come without arms in order to show the peaceful nature of her mission; for if she was, how could she have remained impassive at such unhospi-

table treatment. An engagement of terrible consequence might have ensued, leaving, possibly, a far-reaching ill effect on the relations of both nations. But as it was the "Morrison" left Uraga with but slight injury and sailed towards the bay of Yedo. Upon her departure it was even observed that three Japanese ships manned by about forty soldiers sailed out in pursuit of the "Morrison," continuing to fire at her. Both the art of making arms and gunnery were not much advanced in Japan then; so that in spite of the frantic endeavours of the Japanese the "Morrison" suffered but slight damage."

The American ship arrived at Satsuma in due course, where her appearance caused as much consternation, if not immediate open hostility, as was shown at Uraga. An official with a following of some samurai visited the vessel and told the Americans that the people on land thought that they were pirates and were harbouring bellicose intention against them. Thereupon the latter stated

the true meaning of their mission and produced two formal letters, one to be presented to the Lord Satsuma and the other to the monarch of the land. The official took the epistles and retired, promising to hand them to higher officials. In the meantime the vessel was not allowed to enter the harbour. After some interval the officials returned to the ship and handing back the epistles informed them that the higher officials refused to take them but promised to report the matter to the Kagoshima authorities, so that a reply from Kagoshima would be forthcoming in a short time. The officials also promised to provide the vessel with fuel and water and departed. But the aspect on land was growing threatening. Two days had passed without any sign of the promised reply. Moreover it was clearly observable that warlike preparations were being busily carried on on shore. Not a fisherman's boat approached the "Morrison" as if apprehensive of the occurrence of something dreadful.

The American crew began to despair of ever having their mission fulfilled, when on the third day, three boats rowed up to the "Morrison," bringing some officials who told the luckless Japanese on board the "Morrison" that the foreign ship would be bombarded if she stayed there much longer. No sooner had these officials retired ashore than hundreds of armed samurai appeared on the water's edge and began firing guns at the "Morrison." The Americans could no longer hope for any reasonable reception at the hands of the Japanese, and the poor seven Japanese whom she had brought to be restored to their native land must abandon their hope of ever returning to it. Two of them were so much stricken with despair that they chopped off their long hair and thereby showed their resolution that they would never live to see their native shore again. Thus the "Morrison" was obliged to return to Macao with the seven Japanese, her hope of attaining the object of the expedition

having been absolutely frustrated.

The governor of Uraga reported the whole matter concerning the expulsion of the alien ship to the Shogunate. The latter was highly satisfied with the vigorous measures taken and gave rewards to the governor and other officials of the district. For it is to be remembered that in 1825 the government issued a strict proclamation throughout the provinces that any foreign vessel, appearing along the coast of the empire should be expelled at once without any condition. The injunction was the most inexorable one; it even declared immunity to those who attacked Dutch ships by mistake in their attempt to expell other alien crafts, although the Dutch enjoyed the special privilege to trade with the country at the time. Therefore the unreasonable hostility displayed by the Uraga authorities against the "Morrison" was perfectly lawful in the eyes of the Shogunate.

The "Morrison" affair was a trivial event in comparison with the visit

of Commodore Perry which took place 16 years later. In the former case the object of terror was only one sailing boat, unarmed, and bound on a private mission, while in the latter no less than nine stout warships fully armed under the command of an able naval officer furnished with a state message. Yet it must be remembered that in the history of any nation we often find such an event which, though it is trivial and insignificant in itself, must be regarded as a matter of great consequence in the subsequent history of that country. The "Morrison" affair is a fitting example. It exercised great influence on the relations of the two countries—though the affect wrought in the United States was necessarily different from that which was felt in Japan.

At the close of the year in which the "Morrison" visited our shores Mr. Williams wrote a full account of his voyage to Japan in his "Chinese Repository"; and in the following year Mr. Parker published a book in London treating of the same sub-

ject, which work was succeeded in the ensuing year by a similar publication in New York by Mr. King. Thus three different pens described the same incident in order to wake up the public opinions in Europe and America respecting the Japanese problem. A certain American statesman had about this time even submitted a Bill in Congress, urging that body to take appropriate measures for opening intercourse with Japan. In short the influence the "Morrison" problem had exercised in the United States was no less than this: it aroused the attention of the public to the island nation in the Far East, and thus planted the first seed of the bond of friendship in which the two nations are now bound.

But the effect which was worked in Japan in the immediate sequel of the affair was widely divergent. It proved to be the cause of hot dissension between the conservative and the progressive elements, between those advocating the isolation and anti-foreign policy and those protesting for

opening the country to the intercourse of the world. This struggle resulted in the temporary defeat of the progressists.

From the time of the Bunka era to the beginning of the Tempo the Tokugawa Shogunate was at the height of prosperity. Literature and the fine arts, products of long-continued peace, were much encouraged and developed during this epoch. Especially the literature Japanese, and Chinese were zealously studied by a large class of samurai. History records many a famous man of letters who appeared during this era.

About one hundred years preceding this time the study of a foreign language, mainly the Dutch, was commenced among a section of scholars. During the Tempo era it was pursued with great zeal by some far-seeing thinkers. The students of the foreign language at that time were divided into two classes—one who practiced medicine as a profession dwelling in the central part of cities, and the other who lived in the suburbs

and quietly pursued the study of European philosophy and institutions from the patriotic motive of introducing and adapting the Western civilisation in their country. The most conspicuous and celebrated among the latter class were Choei Takano and Kazan Watanabe. These men and others of the same calibre were wont to assemble under the name of varied private associations, and discussed important questions of the state. They naturally espoused progressive and enlightened ideas, and were secretly opposed to the seclusion policy of the Shogunate. In contrast to those men of progressive ideas there were in the country a large number of conservists consisting of scholars of the Japanese and Chinese classics. A perpetual feud, though of repressed and inward character, existed between these two opposite schools, and was ever ready to burst out in open enmity. The "Morrison" affair incidentally occasioned a fierce rupture of this nature, which ended in a most terrible tragedy, which is instructive

as illustrating under what pitiable ignorance and blunder even the foremost scholars of the time were labouring.

In November, 1838 a party of thinkers of what may be called the enlightened school under Chōei and Kazan held a meeting one day to discuss the national problems of the hour. The conference was protracted and after the superficial element of the company had gone away, and the observance of secrecy had been pledged one of the assembly produced a paper, and read from it as follows:—

“A certain Dutch captain who arrived at Nagasaki this year secretly informed the local governor that a British vessel called the “Morrison” was intending to cross over to Japan and sail directly to Yedo instead of to Nagasaki with the purpose of urging the Tokugawa Government to open the ports to foreign intercourse under the name of sending back some unfortunate Japanese drifted to foreign shores. The central authorities held a council on the subject and de-

cided that the said British ship should be driven away peremptorily, since the arrogance of Great Britain has been most detestably manifested of late.”

Choei and Kazan who were regarded as great authorities on foreign affairs, were astounded at the above piece of news. They argued that the “Morrison” was not a ship—it was the name of a famous English orientalist who had long resided in China and who was recently appointed the commander of a British merchantman. If this Morrison was truly coming to Japan and should be given rude reception there was no knowing what awful calamity might overtake the empire.

Thus Choei and Kazan resolved to do their utmost to disillusion the authorities of their “fatal error.” They published several books of alegorical character and had them circulated among the high officials of the Shogunate Government. It is said that the authorities then learned for the first time that the “Morrison” was the name of a British captain.

About this time a scholar of Chinese classics named Torii who had an influential official position in the Shogunate Government was looking on the fast-growing influence of the Dutch party such as Choei and Kazan with the utmost jealousy, and secretly watching for a chance to destroy their repute. The propagation of the report made by Choei and Kazan concerning the forthcoming visit of Morrison was seized by Torii as an opportunity for impeaching the scholars of the Dutch language before the Government, stating that they were only trying to disturb public peace and order by propagating disquieting rumour. The authorities believed in Torii's representation and resolved to deal relentlessly with those followers of western ideas. Choei and Kazan were arrested—the former imprisoned for life and the latter deported. Kazan soon after committed suicide in despair. Choei once effected an escape taking advantage of a fire which happened to

burn down the prison in which he was incarcerated but soon after committed harakiri just as he was on the point of being rearrested. Some of the friends of Choei and Kazan perceiving the unescapable fate of disgrace put an end to their lives by the similar proceeding.

As it turned out, however, all this bloody tragedy was the outcome of gross misinformation. The Dutch captain referred to thought the "Morrison" a British vessel while Choei and Kazan took it for the name of a British subject; whereas the truth was that this Morrison was the same American boat which visited Uraga and was expelled a year before. Two years after this blundering waste of valuable lives the Japanese exiles who were latterly brought over to the Philippines sent letters to their native provinces, which were subsequently presented to the Tokugawa Government. From these documents the true mission of the foreign ship that shocked the Uraga people was made clear. But even then nobody knew that the

name of that foreign ship was Morrison. Not until some years later when a Dutch book describing the whole details of the "Morrison" affair was imported into Japan, did the Government comprehend the true facts of the case. Even at present but few people know the real cause of the tragic deaths of the famous Choei and Kazan.

ORIGIN OF ISOLATION AND ANTI-FOREIGN POLICY.

To those who are not well acquainted with the concordion of things prevailing in the latter days of feudalism in Japan, the outburst of anti-foreign prejudice depicted in the case of the "Morrison" must appear as atrocious as to the passengers of that vessel. But at the time this unseemly affair took place it did not occur to the Japanese that the reception accorded the ship was anything but proper. It may therefore be asked that whether this bigotry and anti-alienism is the inherent characteristic of the

Japanese people? No foreigner would now hesitate to declare that it is not. For before half a century had elapsed since this event Japan has come to be classed with the foremost nations of the world as a progressive and up-to-date power. The fact is this blind policy of national seclusion was a passing phenomenon, and it is proper to say that Japan was in those days, under a temporary spell of abnormal notions.

The conservative publicists of the later Shogunate days believed this national seclusion the best and safest policy for the empire; the present day writers condemn it as one of fatal errors which greatly fettered the nation's progress; while some foreign thinkers applaud it as the most admirable policy which rescued the country from a grave peril. Be that as it may, let it only be observed here that as a matter of fact the policy was rigidly adhered to by the statesmen of the Tokugawa government.

The first advent of westerners to Japan, as far as can be ascertained

with a degree of accuracy occurred in 1542, when three Portuguese drifted to these shores. In the following year a merchantman of the same nationality arrived at Tanegashima, Osumi province, when fowling guns were for the first time introduced in this country. The Portuguese were everywhere welcomed, chiefly, on account of the novel weapons that they had brought to the country. As time went on the visits of the Portuguese became more frequent and increased in the number coming, until the various ports in Kyushu were thrown open to free tradal intercourse with them.

A little later a missionary of the Jesuit order, named Xavier, arrived at Kagoshima. His coming marked the first introduction of Christianity in Japan and the propagation of this foreign faith with much support on the part of many influential personages in Kyushu, and in the course of only one year no less than 3000 converts were produced. The courageous zeal of the missionaries must of

course have accounted for this phenomenal success; but it is also plain that without the influential patronage of the feudal lords of the districts their zeal might have been less fruitful. It may also be perceived that the partiality shown by the provincial lords was due rather to their love of novelty goods, especially the guns and arms, that the missionaries brought to them than to the true respect for their personality or for their religion. For be it remembered that the country was at that time in a disquiet state of silent civil commotion; each and every province making warlike preparations, lest it should be taken by surprise at any time by its neighbour. The introduction of the new and effective weapon of destruction was, therefore, a great boon to the daimyos, when the lords of western provinces heard of the guns the foreigners brought over, they vied with one another in welcoming their importers, and assisting in their religious mission.

The great facility and wonderful rapidity with which Buddhism was introduced and propagated in Japan about a thousand years previous and which in no time took root to become a second national faith was due to a similar cause. The only difference was that Buddhism brought, instead of warlike weapons, those fine arts which have come down to us of the present age. Indeed it brought in its train the beautiful paintings wonderful sculptures, the gorgeous glittering altars, fascinating music—these and scores of other attractions, besides giving the country literature, poetry, philosophy and in short Chinese and Indian civilisations. Thus it will be seen that even Buddhism gained its footstand in the land not on account of its religious doctrines but by virtue of the material bait it furnished.

Is it then a matter of any wonder at the time when the whole country was engrossed in the increase of arms that the Portugal missionaries who would provide such invaluable imple-

ments of war should be received with such frenzy by every province they visited, and that their religion should rapidly gain so powerful and extensive a hold in the empire? Since the importation of fire arms then the art of war made a remarkable stride in Japan but that the Christian belief which promised at one time to pervade the length and breadth of the Empire was, not long after its introduction, practically eradicated from Japan and that the preachers of that alien faith was utterly prohibited to land at the peril of their lives? What or rather who has brought about such a unexpected turn of affairs?

In 1582 Otomo, Arima, Omura, and other influential Christian lords dispatched a delegate to Rome and presented the Pope with various precious gifts—a fact fully illustrating the extent and influence which the Jesuit propagandists had attained in this country. But it may be recalled that the Christian missionaries of those days were entirely of different

character from those of the present day. Not merely content with the propagation of the "glad tidings of heaven" they combined in them a mission of political significance. The typical foreign missionary of that time, according to his pictorial representation, besides being dressed in a priest's garb with a cross dangling upon his breast, wore a sword at his loin! With the mouth he preached religion; his hand transacted commerce; and in the heart he had a political ambition. His policy was first to win over the hearts of the common people by religion, then to reduce those in power by the bait of trade gains, and then secure a social standing through the aid of political influence. If a suitable chance should occur, he was ready to unseathe the sword and fight for a political subjugation. Territorial aggression was the ultimate and most important object of his mission. The enterprises carried on at that time by the Portuguese in India is a self-evident illustration of this aggressive tendency.

An English writer in his medeaval history of Ceylon island wrote:—the foreigners who visited Ceylon in those days had combined in them the three different characters—of merchant, priest and pirate. The buildings of their commercial firms might at any time be converted into military barracks.

The great patronage and protection extended to the Jesuits by Nobunaga—great military chieftain who strove and in some measure succeeded in centralising the military power of the country proved afterwards in an indirect way the fatal bane to the Jesuit propagandists.

The influence of Buddhist priests had also been steadily rising and threatened to prove a menace to the fulfilment of Nobunaga's plan of integrating political authority.... There was an ever-growing tendency of aggressive militarism among the Buddhist priests of the time.

On the other hand the Jesuit propaganda was being strenuously pushed on with great success. Nobunaga in

his casual interview with a Portuguese missionary inquired of him the reason for the inferiority of the Christian mission to the Buddhist in the number of churches; when the latter replied that it was mainly due to the hindrance and persecution of the Christians, Nobunaga was indignant and promised his protection to the Christian missionaries, and swore to chastise the arrogant Buddhists. About this time the famous campaign against Buddhist priests and the wholesale massacre of their devotees were commenced. The Jesuits, in pursuance of their own aim and in reliance with the protection of Nobunaga committed various acts of lawlessness in order to implant and widen their influence in Japan. They burnt Buddhist temples and deliberately disobeyed the orders of the local authorities. But such was the force and influence of the Jesuits among the masses that even the feudal lords were powerless to check their arrogant activity. Nobunaga encouraged and protected them more

and more: he maintained his first policy of taking advantage of the potential influence of the Jesuits in extirpating Buddhism from the empire.

Some historians relate that Nobunaga was in later years repentant of the protection he accorded to the western missionaries. But this story does not seem quite authentic. It is more likely that he desired to profit himself by the aid of the Jesuits till the end, if he had lived long enough to achieve his purpose. Had he seen through the dark ambition of the Jesuits he might have employed the same vigorous measures against them as his immediate successor took. But he fell a victim to the revengeful dagger of a subordinate who owed him a personal grudge before his work was half accomplished.

The arrogance and high-handedness of the Christian missionaries grew day by day, especially in Kyushu. At Nagasaki several Buddhist temples were burnt by them, and every in-

habitant of that town had to become converted.

When Nobunaga was no more, Hideyoshi rapidly rose to power and pursued the unaccomplished enterprises of Nobunaga. It was by Hideyoshi that the first example of anti-Christian campaign was set. In 1587 on his homeward journey from his victorious crusade in Kyushu he sojourned at Hakata, where delegates of the foreign missionaries were presented to the conqueror. They were so proud and rude in their behaviour towards the short-tempered Hideyoshi that his ire was instantly up and he exclaimed: "who and what are they?" The foreigners were then described as a set of unruly, arrogant people who had destroyed several temples and shrines. Hideyoshi at once issued a decree, consisting of five clauses ordering the expulsion of the Christian preachers and their followers. He confiscated Nagasaki which had fallen under the jurisdiction of the Jesuits; and ordered the foreigners to leave Japan within 20 days. They

failed to obey the decree, upon which he destroyed Nanbanji, the headquarters of the Jesuits, and had their followers arrested. Thus the rôle of the first Japanese ruler who had publicly prohibited the propaganda of the western belief had fallen to the lot of Hideyoshi.

But, a genuine soldier as he was, Hideyoshi was not so blind as to be unable to see the profit of foreign trade: in his decree he included a clause permitting the free entry of bona fide foreign merchants, though the missionaries were strictly denied the privilege.

His successor Iyeyasu, the most cool-headed, astute soldier and statesman Japan has ever produced—the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate, who accomplished and perfected what Nobunaga, Hideyoshi and a host of other ambitious military chieftain prepared the way for,—was also keenly alive to the advantages of foreign commerce. The impression that Hideyoshi and Iyeyasu tried to suppress the foreign trade is a mistake.

Iyeyasu even encouraged Japanese merchants to go abroad for tradal purpose.

The largest portion of foreigners who had hitherto visited Japan were Portuguese and Spanish; and the Dutch who were trading in the other parts of the Orient had been on the lookout for a chance of attaining a permit to compete with them in Japan, but were hindered by the Portuguese in their endeavours. But they found an opportunity of making their way to this country at a time when the decisive battle of Sekigahara was in progress—a campaign which earned for Iyeyasu the seat and title of the first Shogun. Thus the road was paved for the triumph which the Dutch traders subsequently won over the Portuguese merchants in commercial competition.

Jan Josten captain of the first Dutch boat that visited Japan and Adams, an English pilot were received by Iyeyasu at Yedo with much civility, and in response to his several queries related the prevailing con-

ditions of Europe. This proved the first step which led to that historic commercial intercourse between the Dutch and Japan. About this time the Portuguese missionaries again commenced to show activity and try to reassert their influence on the quiet. Iyeyasu was concerned at this sign of the Jesuit revival, when the Dutch residents advised him of the dark ambition lurking under the apparently religious mission of the Portuguese. This induced Iyeyasu to issue in 1614 a decree, ordering the Catholic missionaries, whether foreigner or Japanese, to be driven away from Japan. Great persecution of the Roman Catholic believers commenced from this time. Everywhere throughout the country a public notice was put up, vetoing the belief of the alien creed. The persistent missionaries, however, not being disconcerted at such discouraging reactionary force continued to preach their faith under various disguises; but this only served to render the government surveillance more and more severe

and its persecution of the Catholic believers more and more cruel. But the Shogunate still could not reconcile themselves to sacrificing what they believed to be the advantages of foreign commerce at the altar of their policy of excluding the foreign religious mission. A special censorship was instituted during the term of the third Shogun—Iyemitsu—over all foreign visitors that the element of the alien missionary might be checked from pestering the land.

In 1632 a Portuguese priest commissioned by the Pope to revive the faith in Japan, crossed over to this country in the company of nine other Portuguese disguised as Chinamen, and set about secretly preaching the religion in the neighbourhood of Nagasaki. The disguised missionaries succeeded in concealing their identity for about one year, but were at last detected, arrested and sent over to Yedo, where they were put to death. This incident coupled with the secret but steady spread of Christianity among the masses caused the Shogu-

nate Government to issue an edict in 1635, prohibiting the Japanese subjects from going abroad, and closing all the ports to foreign intercourse except Nagasaki. All the Portuguese and Spanish merchants were transported thither, where they were subjected to rigorous supervision. Two years after this, the famous Shimabara revolt occurred—a religious rebellion partaken by tens of thousands of converts, mainly peasants, under the leadership of Christian samurai against the suppressive measures of the local lords. The uprising resulted in a frightful massacre only comparable in its dimensions to that of Nobunaga against the Buddhist followers already referred to. This event at last compelled the Shogunate Government to the conclusion that the advantages of foreign trade and the expulsion of the alien creed were incompatible and they decided to sacrifice the former for the sake of the latter. In 1639 an ordinance was issued, decreeing wholesale deportation of Portuguese from Nagasaki;

and the Dutch were to take their place. It should be remembered here that Christianity which occasioned such trouble was of the Roman Catholic denomination, whereas Protestantism which was espoused by the Dutch was not regarded by the authorities as proper Christianity. Thus the foreign trade monopolized by the Portuguese for a period of over eighty years came to an end. This ordinance of 1639 coupled with the anti-Portuguese edict are generally known as the two sakokurei (close-ports ordinances) of Kan-ei.

It is a noteworthy fact that at the head of the roju or elder councillors in the Shogunate Government who signed this anti-foreign ordinance was Lord Naotaka Ii, and that two hundred years later his direct descendant Lord Naosuke Ii, the hero of this sketch, should have assumed the leading role in the drama doing away with this selfsame policy of exclusion and of opening the country to foreign commerce at the sacrifice of his life.

While on the one hand such vigorous measure was adopted against the incoming of the Christian religion summary proceedings of no less severity were taken at home to root out the influence of the foreign belief. At Nagasaki where this influence was most deeply implanted people were forced to trample upon the pictures of Christ at stated intervals so as to detect Christian believers. Besides, throughout the nation a censorship of the strictest nature was exercised to eradicate and punish those who believed in Christianity. The long continuance of such relentless persecution necessarily engendered a deep sense of dread for Christianity in the minds of the common people; and the word Christian or *Kirishitan* came to be associated with all that was abominable and frightful. Gradually this hysteric dread of *Kirishitan* evolved into the fear of all foreigners indiscriminately. It is therefore a matter of little wonder that every European or American should subsequently have been looked upon

with undisguised distrust and suspicion.

What otherwise contributed largely to the formation of this powerful anti-alien sentiment was a bitter experience which Japan tasted during her tradal intercourse with foreign merchants. It was purely of economic nature, and was not perceived until long after it had become an accomplished fact.

Those who held the reins of government during the Tokugawa Shogunate were all samurai who were little acquainted with anything beyond the use of the sword and the art of war. In short theirs was a military government. It is not to be surprised at all that the foreign trade encouraged and supervised under such government should have ended in great disadvantages to Japan. The articles imported chiefly comprised such things as were quite useless for practical purposes or those that ministered to the luxurious habits of the people—even the silks, which now form one of the most important ar-

ticles of export, were then bought from abroad. Japan was a buyer and customer—her gold and silver were fast flowing out. The Japanese foreign trade was then, to use modern terms, in the condition of “excess of imports over exports with exodus of specie”. At the time when our trade with the Portuguese merchants was at its height, various mines were found and worked, with the result that a large quantity of gold and silver was produced, but which fast flowed into the hands of the foreign merchants. Not until the Government found the grievous want of specie in circulation at home, did they realize the disadvantages of foreign trade; and took the necessary measures to restrict the outgoing of the hard money.

About a century and a half after the closing of ports Japan was insulated from any threatening foreign influence, principally because of the fast declining influence of Spain and Portugal. But Japan suddenly found herself confronted by a formidable array of other Powers from totally

unexpected quarters viz. England, France and Russia. The three Powers vied with one another in seeking to extend their influence in the Far East. Russia gradually encroached upon Yezo, the portal to the northern part of the Empire. In 1804 a Russian envoy named Resanoff arrived at Nagasaki and sought to open intercourse with Japan, as a close neighbour. After conducting fruitless negotiations for about six months the envoy quitted Japan. After this several instances are recorded of Russians making aggressive incursions on Kurille Islands and Sagahlien—they plundered the inhabitants of these islands and assaulted their women.

On October 4th in 1808 a British ship called Phaeton suddenly appeared at Nagasaki; she came in pursuance of a Dutch merchantman which she thought had taken shelter in Nagasaki harbour. The British vessel entered the port with the Dutch flag flying at her bow. The Dutch residents at Nagasaki who innocently visited the English boat were taken

prisoners, and made to guide the British sailors in their search into every nook and corner of the port. The Governor of Nagasaki, Lord Matsudaira, was terribly indignant at the report, and ordered the guards of Saga to punish the audacious British boat. But unfortunately, (or fortunately) the guards of Saga had all disappeared, and could not immediately respond to the sudden call. Meanwhile the British ship left the port quite unmolested. Lord Matsudaira's compunction knew no limits that the foreign craft should have been suffered to leave without even one blow being dealt at it. He committed harakiri by way of amendment for his official negligence. This affair attracted great public attention. Though trivial in itself the occurrence exercised far-reaching effect in further intensifying the anti-foreign feelings already aroused to a high pitch by Russia's aggressive conduct.

There was another element which steadily engendered and strengthened the racial bias against

the foreigners. It was Confucianism. The Teishu school of Confucianism which was the most extensively studied during the Tokugawa regime of three hundred years first came into popularity in China when that country was in the throes of struggle owing to her trouble with foreign aggressors; so that its doctrines were naturally pregnant with anti-foreign ideas.

ADVENT OF COMMODORE PERRY AND
TREATY OF AMITY.

The first European nation which attempted negotiations with Japan for concluding a treaty of commerce was Russia. But the mission of unbarring the closed doors of Japan fell on America. At the time of the first visit of Commodore Perry, some conservative publicists insisted on rejecting the proposal under the plea of a breach of international etiquette, of which Japan would be guilty towards Russia, since it was that nation which first tried in vain to enter into intercourse.

Eight years after the Morrison affair, the Manhatan an American whaler rescued 22 Japanese off the coast of Ogasawara and visited Tateyama to restore them to Japan. The severity of the Government's policy against foreigners had become much mitigated by this time; and the American ship was greeted with some show of civility. The rescued Japanese were received back and the fuel and food materials given in exchange; and the ship departed in peace. In the same year Commodore Biddle clothed with plenary powers to conduct negotiations with the Japanese Government arrived at Uraga with two well armed warships. The local governor did not allow the warships to enter the port on account of their heavy armaments. Furthermore Commodore Biddle's request to open negotiations was refused by the order of the Yedo Government; and perceiving that the times were not still ripe for such negotiations the American fleet quitted Uraga, after being provided with food and fuel.

About this time the question of establishing friendly relations with Japan was being discussed and studied in the United States; there were several reasons which rendered this problem one of urgent importance from the standpoint of the American interest. The first was that the American whalers when drifted to the Japanese shores were, instead of being kindly cared for, generally put into prison or otherwise given harsh treatment through misunderstanding. The cases of these uncalled-for ill treatment had grown so frequent and the grievances lodged with the U. S. Government so numerous that the latter could no longer remain silent about the matter. The second was one of great importance to the United States, from the standpoint of international politics. As a result of her victorious war in 1848 with Mexico, the Republic annexed California; thus extending her territory to the Pacific. Attracted by the wonderful prospects of gold digging in California great numbers of Americans and

other nationals poured into the Pacific state. Commerce was soon opened between California and China, and American steamers sailing to and from China gradually grew in number. The steamers of those days being of small tonnage must needs have coaling places en route their voyages to China and the Japanese ports would serve the purpose splendidly. The United States had much to dread from Russia, lest the latter should take possession of any Japanese port along the Pacific coast on account of her traditional policy of carrying her conquest southward.

These reasons stimulated the United States to make all possible endeavours to secure Japan's friendship.

In 1854 the storm gathering over the Black Sea culminated in the outbreak of war with Russia on one side and France and England on the other—namely the Crimian war. The United States taking advantage of the European commotion adroitly dispatched Commodore Perry to Japan and succeeded in carrying out her

long-cherished desire. When the Dutch Government heard of the intention of the United States they proposed to render assistance to Commodore Perry in his mission, but the latter declined the offer. The Commodore arrived at Uraga on July 8th 1853, at the head of a fleet of four well-armed ships, which on its second visit was reinforced by 5 more vessels.

The manner of arrival of Commodore Perry's fleet and the chaotic commotion which it occasioned in Japan have been described by so many able writers that it is hardly necessary to be told here. Suffice it to say that the negotiations between the Tokugawa Government and the American envoy were continued from March 8th to 30th of the same month at the end of which time a treaty was signed. It was made up of 12 clauses, the main points of which were first, the opening of Shimoda and Hako-date ports; secondly, free access to fuel and food for American ships in exchange for money or com-

modities; thirdly that all the transactions be made by the local officials; fourthly, the American consulate or commissioner's office be established 18 months after signing the treaty; and fifthly, that if Japan should extend any special facilities or privileges to other foreign nations she shall extend the same to the United States.

This agreement provided for the opening of the two ports and neutralized the policy of seclusion then in force; but it cannot be said to have been signed for the opening of whole Japan to free foreign intercourse. For the exchange of commodities referred to was restricted to such things as were necessary to shipping and failed to cover general trading. The establishment of consulate was only limited to one port, and again the consul was only to attend to the transactions of one port instead of representing his country like a minister in affairs of international import. The true opening of Japan to the world's commerce and intercourse was instituted by the

treaty signed at Kanagawa by Townsend Harris. Therefore those who study the foreign diplomacy of the latter day Tokugawa Government must remember that there were two distinct phases in the opening of Japan to the world. It was of course next to impossible that a thoroughly satisfactory treaty could be concluded at the time of Perry's visit, nor was this advisable in view of the prevailing condition of things at the time. After all the treaty of amity of Commodore Perry was the most desirable step that could possibly have been taken under the circumstances. It was undoubtedly a signal success for the United States and a great boon, though trying at the time, for the future advancement of Japan's civilisation.

CHAPTER II.

LORD II NAOSUKE.

To give a correct conception of the political views of a statesman it is necessary to make clear the political position he occupied and depict his character in the light thereof. When one is in the dark as to the statesman's political position one can hardly comprehend the degree of weight and reliableness attached to his views. Again without the knowledge of the man's personality one would fail to know the motives underlying his views. Therefore before entering upon the study of Lord II's political views let us briefly review the history of his ancestors and how he was brought up. All this is peculiarly necessary; because in the feudal times, the class-distinctions were so great and absolute and so much importance was attached to the family lineage, that great men, however great in the true meaning of the word, were

not regarded as such if their ancestors were not great also.

Ii Naosuke, astute and farseeing himself, came of a family which at once gave him great social and political position. He was a direct descendant of a noble and renowned family, which produced many a great and famous warrior who had rendered invaluable service to the Tokugawa Shogunate. The Ii family was the pillar, so to say, of the Tokugawa Shogunate. Naosuke's earliest forefather came of the distinguished Fujiwara house. In the time of Naochika Ii the empire was plunged into a chaos of bloody warfare when he fell a victim to the culumny of a perfidious old samurai. He was killed leaving behind him an orphan of two years to succeed to his house. Had this little orphan perished early the whole history of the Tokugawa Shogunate might have had a different story to tell. The orphan was no other than the famous Naomasa Ii who proved himself the "right hand" man of Iyeyasu in the upbuilding of

the Tokugawa Shogunate. He fought no less than sixteen battles in his life time. His valour and genius as a general were unequalled by any of his contemporaries except by Iyeyasu himself and one or two others. When the famous Sekigahara campaign commenced, a certain veteran samurai predicted victory for Iyeyasu, because there were on his side the three most formidable generals—namely Iyeyasu, Fukushima and Ii. In a letter to a kinsman in his later years, Iyeyasu said of Naomasa that he was a quiet, thoughtful and taciturn man; he always let others speak, himself listening, but whenever any measure against his sense of propriety or justice should threaten to be adopted, he would calmly but firmly set forth his reasons so that generally in the end the council had to submit to his views. That Naomasa was held in great favour and esteem by Iyeyasu can easily be perceived even from this epistle.

Naomasa died comparatively young in consequence of severe wounds received in the Sekigahara battle. Naomasa always had the honour of leading the van in any battlefield—a privilege permitted to the most gallant general of the army. After his death his second son Naotaka was appointed his successor at the urgent instance of Iyeyasu and made lord of the Hikone Castle with an annual income of 150,000 koku of rice, which was soon increased to 300,000 koku. By the posthumous order of Iyeyasu Naotaka was sent to Yedo to assist Shogun Iyemitsu in his Government. He remained in Yedo for 29 years without once returning to his home. After Iyemitsu's death he acted as the guardian of the new young Shogun Iyetsuna. Naotaka survived three Shoguns, serving them by turns with the utmost faith and loyalty. He lived to the venerable age of three score and ten.

Naotaka, though he did not share the calm thoughtfulness and silent fortitude of his father, Naomasa, was

yet sagacious, brave, decisive and energetic. The peace prevailing during his days afforded him no chance for showing his martial prowess. But whenever any difficult problems presented themselves, they were invariably submitted to Naotaka, and history records several instances of serious questions being satisfactorily settled by him. With the growing influence and prosperity of the Tokugawa Shogunate the Ii family also grew in strength and influence. The master of the family was at home the lord of Hikone Castle with 300,000 koku and in the Shogunate Government held the highest official position. The Ii family moreover held the glorious office of guarding and protecting Kyoto—the seat of the Imperial Court. If the Emperor should have any cause for personal peril, Hikone Castle was to be instantly converted into the temporary quarters for His Majesty. This distinction entitled him to occupy the first seat in the *Tamari no ma* or ante-chamber in the Shogun's Court.

It was he that the Shogunate Government generally appointed as special envoy to the Imperial Court at Kyoto, or to the Mausoleum at Nikko. He also superintended all the important ceremonials in the Shogun's household. The office of Tairo, or Prime Minister was also given to the lord of Hikone. These special privileges first earned by the gallantry and loyalty of Naomasa and Naotaka were handed down to the posterity of the Ii family until the restoration days.

It must here be stated that the position of the Tairo may be literally described as the plenary representative of Shogun empower with the entire conduct of government. It was not a permanent one but was established only when the Shogun was either too young or in ill health or when some serious crisis confronted the nation. All through the Tokugawa regime those who were appointed to this position of the highest responsibility were only 3 in number besides the Ii family—namely Sakai, Hotta and

and Yanagisawa. The Ii family produced no less than six Tairo, and the last to hold the office was Naosuke the hero of this sketch.

Another of Naosuke's forefathers Naooki was a straightforward and astute statesman. He had courage of his conviction even in the presence of the Shogun, and possessed the undaunted spirit of the genuine Yamato samurai. When Shogun Tsunayoshi took up the reins of office, he called together all the daimyos and put their loyalty to test. Mitsukuni Tokugawa (Lord of Mito) was the first to respond, declaring that no daimyo would dare to entertain any inordinate intentions, but that if there were any who did, he himself would lead the van of the army against the traitor. Thereupon Naooki corrected Mitsukuni, saying: Thou shall not! for I have the right to claim that honour by virtue of thy great ancestor Iyeyasu's will and which was earned by the valour and patriotism of my forefathers. The generous Mitsukuni good-humouredly acknowledged his mistake.

In the seventh degree of descent from Naooki stands Naonaka, the father of Naosuke Ii. Naonaka was a gentle, humane, and enterprising aristocrat. His robust health and energy enabled him to master in youth all the military and gentle arts then in vogue. He was well versed in horsemanship and gunnery; he established a new school of the latter called *Ikkanyu*. He introduced several reforms and innovations in his clan. He distributed large amounts of money bequeathed by his father among the people of Hikone to improve their economic condition; abolished heavy taxation system then in force; established a large scholastic institution and a fire brigade; encouraged various industries and erected beautiful shrines dedicated to his great forefathers, Naomasa and Naokata. On the other hand he himself exercised strict economy and simplicity of life. Withal Naonaka was merciful and liberal, ever ready to listen to the counsels of his subjects.

Once it happened that Naonaka deceived by the culumny of a wicked follower caused an innocent subject to be thrown into prison. One night being unable to sleep he rose from the bed, repaired to the verandah where he sat looking on the moon. Smitten with a sorrowful emotion he wrote an uta the purport of which was something as follows:—

As I gaze on the moon that alone and quiet shines, my heart aches for him that in prison pines.

In the morning a piece of paper bearing the verse was sent to the poor prisoner, and he was at once released. Naosuke had such a benevolent, fatherly father in Naonaka. His mother was a beautiful and sagacious lady.

Lord Naosuke was born at Hikone in 1815. Though coming of such splendid parentage, his birth was regarded with little importance; for Naonaka already had several children, and nobody ever dreamed at the time that this boy was destined to play so important a rôle in the na-

tional history. In his seventeenth year he lost his father. Of all the children of Naonaka, Naosuke and his younger brother were the only sons whose future careers had been undecided. The residence in which Naosuke grew up till then being thought much too magnificent for an insignificant youngster like Naosuke, he was removed to a family estate in a suburb, which though very picturesquely situated, could never be a fitting abode for a son of the princely family like Ii. In this humble place Naosuke and his younger brother dwelt with a small allowance of 300 koku per annum. The allowance would have been quite competent for an average samurai but for an offspring of the honoured Ii family, bound to keep up the dignity of their ancestors was far from being sufficient and the two brothers had to exercise strict economy and lead simple, even frugal existence. In 1834 Naosuke who was now in his twentieth year was summoned together with his younger brother to Yedo at

the order of the eldest brother Naoaki who had succeeded to be the head of the family. Several daimyos, then assembled in Yedo were looking for young lordlings to adopt, and the two brothers stood as possible candidates. The younger brother had the good fortune to be selected by the lord of Hyuga province; and rose at a bound to be Noto-no-Kami with an annual income of 10,000 koku. But nobody would have poor Naosuke and he had no chance for promotion. After remaining over a year in Yedo he returned home—to his humble dwelling at Hikone. The renowned Naotaka the practical founder of the House of Ii had willed that any descendants of his who were neither first born nor adopted into other families, or who failed to secure official positions should be assigned to a small residence and compelled to live in a humble manner. Evidently Naotaka believed in adversity—he himself was a product of adversity and hoped that by leaving this injunction behind

a second Naotaka might appear from the Ii family.—Nor was his hope in vain, for three hundred years after, the family produced Naosuke.

Naosuke called his humble abode *Umoregi-no-ya* or the fossil-wood hut; he compared himself to the fossil-wood buried under ground from the light of the world. He resigned all worldly ambitions and contented himself by quietly but diligently pursuing his favourite studies of literature and military arts. Not that he abandoned his aspirations to serve his country and resolved to pass his life in idle pleasure and quiet hermitude; but he devoted night and day to his culture with unremitting assiduity so that in case of a national emergency he might discharge the duties he owed to his ancestors and the state.

In this condition of neglect and seclusion Naosuke remained for fifteen long years and those were the most important fifteen years in his life. It was then that he moulded his character,—his wonderful dexterity in the civil and military accomplishments,

his manly, undaunted spirit, his thorough acquaintance and wide sympathy with the masses, his weighty thoughtfulness were all nourished during this period of self-culture. Of the divers arts of soldiery he made a speciality of the art of dealing efficiently with an enemy while in a sitting posture—an art commonly called *iai*; and at the age of twenty he attained the profound secrets of the art. He refrained from publishing them to the world at the time, lest in view of his youthful age and insignificant position he should unnecessarily expose himself to ridicule and suspicion. But later after he had risen to the lordship of Hikone he published a book on the subject to the incalculable benefit of samurai.

Naosuke's indefatigable diligence and unconquerable energy are well illustrated by the fact that he was wont to declare in those days of "buried existence" that four hours' sleep sufficed for a man of healthy constitution. He also paid attention to the study of military tactics. In

one of his letters addressed to his instructor on warfare in Yedo the following passage occurs: "I regret that many a day passes in comparative uselessness. The more I study the subject, the more questions and doubts present themselves. I almost despair of ever succeeding in clearing away the cloud of doubts and of entering into the serene state of perfect mastery. But nothing is more abominable to my nature than to give up what I have set my hands to before it is fully accomplished." In another epistle he wrote: "Kindly give me some very difficult problems for my study and solution."

These passages are well illustrative of the great zeal and pains with which young Naosuke pursued his studies and strove for his own culture. Besides studying the science of war Naosuke devoted his leisure hours to the study of literature, including poetry, and other refined arts. His most favourite pastime was the *chanoyu*, the tea ceremony. With his characteristic zeal he studied this accomplishment.

When he had mastered several schools of this ceremony, he sent for the then greatest authority of the *chanoyu* in Yedo and initiated himself into its deepest secrets. His great partiality for the apparently idle occupation was not without justification. For he declared: "Human beings are all equals, having no distinction of high and low by nature. But the social condition necessitating the class distinctions cannot be destroyed with safety. I love the tea ceremony because it precludes this humbug of social barriers between high and low. It emancipates for the time being the participants from the troublesome conventionalities." In the "tea party" precedence is decided not by social classifications but by the degree of skill and taste displayed by the partakers. Thus tradesmen may be placed in the front while daimyo may have seat in the back. Naosuke held regular meetings of tea ceremony in his Umoregi cottage to which persons of various professions and occupations were invited. A certain

humble plasterer called Rihachi was one of the regular attendants.

Though born in a proud aristocratic family, Naosuke was highly democratic in his nature, as may well be seen from the above. His situation as well as his own temperament obtained for him various acquaintances. In the morning he would meet samurai and in the evening talk with scholars; now he was discoursing with priests and then he was in the company of plebian tea sippers. It was during this period of quiet culture and free intercourse that he contracted many valuable friendships which lasted till his tragic end. He counted several Buddhist priests among his friends; and he at one time had actually a mind to accept the offer of a distinguished priest, abbot of a Buddhist temple, to adopt him. In his lonesome and desolate situation the offer of the priest sounded to him like a revelation. He even consulted his eldest brother, head of the Ii family, or the lord of Hikone. But the latter peremp-

torily forbade Naosuke's request. For a time Naosuke sank into a state of despondency and passed many a melancholy and sleepless night bewailing his unfortunate lot. But how little he knew what a wonderful career was in store for him. Providence seemed to have given him long time for respite and culture so that he might bear the complex and hard and trying career it had specially reserved for him for the sake of his country.

Three years later, an alarming report came from Yedo that Naoaki's heir Naomoto was dangerously ill. What did this news signify to Naosuke? His eldest brother Naoaki was the lord of Hikone whose heir was also his elder brother; and now this heir of the family was critically ill. If he should die it was more than probable that Naosuke would be appointed heir of Naoaki and subsequently rise to the estate of his forefather, the lordship of Hikone with 300,000 koku. But Naosuke was in no wise pleased at this sudden pro-

spect of being rescued from long oblivion and retirement. He had already abandoned all political ambition; he rather wished to remain in the solitude and peace of a country life. Naosuke was then 32 years of age. In a letter he wrote to one of his most intimate friends at this time he said: "I am deeply grieved at the intelligence that my brother is precariously indisposed, and praying with all my soul for his recovery. Please sympathize with me in present sorrow."

On the day he penned the above message his brother, Naomoto heir to the Ii estate expired. A few weeks later Naosuke received intimation from his eldest brother that he had been appointed his heir and that he should repair post haste to Yedo. The intimation was absolute and admitted of no refusal. Naosuke was for a time overwhelmed with the sudden and great change which now presented itself in his career. But his Lordship's (his brother's) command was inexorable. Naosuke

plucked up his courage, and stood up saying that “my lord’s will shall be obeyed,” and on February 1st, 1846 bade farewell for ever to the *Umoregi-no-ya*.

Having arrived in Yedo, Naosuke on March 25th was received in audience by the Shogun, and on the following day he dispatched a letter to Hikone in which he said:—“When we set out for the Shogun’s castle, I was attended by a large following of retainers, and could not but wonder at this remarkable change of my situation. In the palanquin I shed secretly tears of gratitude.” But the height to which he had suddenly risen did not make him dizzy. Besides he was as yet merely an heir and, in state affairs he could not but remain only an on-looker. But with the grand prospects before him he set improving himself by associating with superior talents, listening to the counsel of older retainers of the family; and keeping himself constantly informed of what was progressing in the Government. His

ever increasing zeal to serve the state when the time comes may be seen in several of his letters, of which the following is an extract.

“My sudden promotion is truly unexpected and providential. I owe my good fortune entirely to the virtue of my ancestors and the grace of the ruler. Whatever pain I will most willingly bear that I may repay all the profound gratitude that I owe to the state. My resolution is unshakable; you may set your heart at ease on this point—My present promotion being of the most exceptional character, I should not be content with rendering the perfunctory service of an ordinary daimyo.—The most important requisites in the Government of our clan are benevolence and righteousness.—I have spoken and will speak most unreservedly on the affairs of the Government, and so you must follow my example in giving me such suggestions and counsels as you may deem necessary.”

It may be noted here that Naoaki, the then lord of Hikone did not

possess the same fire of patriotism and earnestness of purpose as Naosuke, and his career both as the lord of his clan and as one of chief officials of the Shogunate Government were more or less of failure. As for Naosuke, he was frequently permitted to be at the Shogun's Court and had ample opportunity to inform himself about the important questions of state. It is no matter of surprise that to a man of his ability and spirit the conduct of the ministry and high officials should have given him cause for a feeling of irritation. Many letters he wrote to his confidants at this time were expressive of this sentiment in the most undisguised manner. The perfunctoriness, want of decision and foresight, and absence of firm character among those in power constantly troubled his mind. In one of his letters he regretted that there were very few who had the courage to come forward and face the complex problems then confronting the nation. In another he sarcastically remarked that the

world had greatly degenerated and that men were becoming shallow and superficial. In still another he observed: "The visits of foreign ships have commenced this year earlier than is usual. How this foreign question will terminate nobody knows. Our Empire is now in a most critical condition, but I can see no one who seems to be awake to the seriousness of the situation. I have heard it remarked by the Mito Chunagon that the world is now in the "afternoon." What a terrible time we are in! I can not but heave great sighs. Several discussions have taken place on the question of sea-defence, but no decision has yet been arrived at, neither is there any likelihood of any appropriate policy being adopted within the year. What a deplorable state of things!"

This anxious suspense and trying watchfulness continued for five years, which cannot but be said a long age for Naosuke; for his fifteen years' culture in the *Umorigi-no-ya* days quite sufficed to equip him with the

necessary qualifications for a first-class statesman. He had now spent five long years in the rôle of a close and silent spectator of the workings of the machinery of government. No statesmen had ever undergone such a thorough education and preparation as he had. Indeed none were better qualified for the important post of *tairo*, the Prime Minister of the Shogunate Government, which he subsequently occupied, than Ii Naosuke.

Five years after he came up to Yedo, viz., in 1850., Lord Naoaki, the head of family died at Hikone. Before two months had elapsed Naosuke was, at the order of the Shogun, installed the lord of Hikone as the 14th of line. He was thenceforward called by the name of Ii Kamon-nokami Naosuke, Lord of Hikone Castle. This auspicious event took place three years before Commodore Perry visited Uraga.

Naosuke's accession to the lordship of Hikone was commemorated by an act of unprecedented generosity: under

the name of the late lord's will be distributed among his retainers and the people of Hikone a sum of no less than 150,000 ryo in gold, a sum convertible into 300,000 koku of rice, or one year's income of the Ii family, which corresponds in modern currency to over one and a half million yen. The people who had suffered under the despotic maladministration of Naoaki were overwhelmed with gratitude and felt as if they had a reinvigorating shower after a long continued drought. At the same time Lord Ii set about introducing several reforms and improvements in the government of Hikone even before the term of mourning for the deceased lord had expired. Yet he was not so blind as to fail to see that to raise a hue and cry of reforms immediately on his succession to power was not the best policy of winning the hearts of his subjects. So he secretly gave strong instructions to his older retainers that no such words as reform or improvement be used in their

reform works. It is to be much regretted, however, that his work of reforms were not altogether satisfactorily carried out. His enemies imputed this fact to his want of stability; but the injustice of such an accusation is quite evident when one remembers that he had to devote his entire time to his duties as the leading statesman of the Shogunate Government. In 1851, a year after he succeeded to Naoaki's estate, he came home to Hikone, but only after a year's sojourn he again had to return to Yedo. In 1853 Naosuke went home for a second time and entered the Castle of Hikone on June 1st; but on the 7th of the same month before he had sufficiently recovered from his journey, a special messenger came from Sagami to inform him of the advent of a American fleet. This startling report was soon followed by a post-haste message from the Shogun asking Naosuke's immediate return to Yedo. Lord Ii at once complied and from that time till his tragic end at Saku-

rada, he had not a moment's leisure to himself. How could he under such circumstances, when the safety of the nation was at stake, have thought of his own clan?

Regarding the strenuous endeavours and self-sacrificing service which Lord Ii rendered to the Shogunate Government they will be dwelt on in subsequent chapters; but before closing this chapter let a few more lines be written on his personal temperament. For few statesmen of national greatness have suffered so much from misrepresentation as he has. Those who represent him as being strong-willed even to the verge of stubbornness, harsh, relentless, hard-to-please and cantankerous know only one side of him. For Naosuke was, both from his experience, refined tastes and personal temperament, a most generous, humane, and courteous aristocrat; and the truth of this may be seen from many letters still extant and the personal testimonies of those old retainers who directly served him in those troubled times. It is also

true that he was never impulsive, being always perfectly calm in the teeth of dangers and troubles; and that he seldom showed emotional weakness. One year, while at Yedo, he was troubled with an ulcer on the face. It so happened that he was called to the Shogunate Court to attend a certain religious ceremony, and since he could not appear with a plaster on his face, he asked a physician if he could not get it cured at once. The doctor replied that there was no other way but to cut open the sore, which operation, however, would cost him excruciating pain. Lord Ii replied he did not mind the pain. So the operation was executed at once. During the whole proceeding he did not manifest the least sign of suffering to the amazement of the physician, who afterwards declared that he had never treated such a courageous patient in his life before.

As regards Lord Naosuke's magnanimity it is well illustrated by his liberal treatment of

his subjects. Whenever any of his attendants committed an awkward blunder or fault he was ever ready to forgive him; so that all of his pages and retainers used to say that they could serve their lord with perfect ease of mind. In addition to the largeness of soul and inflexibility of purpose, he possessed a most remarkable trait of looking into the details of affairs. An inspection of his numerous letters addressed to his friends and kinsmen will convince the reader of this. To translate one which he sent to the widow of his eldest brother, Naoaki, inviting her to a *No* performance held in his residence, it runs: "We are having a very gloomy weather of late, but I am rejoiced that you are in as bright spirits as ever. As you are aware I have given instructions to hold a *No* performance at home on the 18th and 19th, and have already asked you to come on the 18th; but if you should have any desire to see the plays on both days, you are most welcome. At any rate the play will continue

into the night, since the day is short nowadays; and so I suppose you will experience some inconvenience, if you were to go home after dark. I therefore beg to suggest whether it will not be more convenient for you to stay overnight at our house and see the *No* at your leisure. I have already given instructions to my steward about it, and he says that he can most easily arrange lodging accommodation for you. But since of course you can not expect satisfactory accommodation in my house (I am much concerned on this point), I beseech you to decide on whatever course you deem convenient, if you do not like to accept my proposition. Nothing is farther from my heart than to force any thing upon you. I herewith beg to send you the programme of the plays. The piece to be given on the second day is a very novel one. If you intend to favour us with your company on both days, you need only come on the 1st day without any thought or preparation of passing the night in our

house which, I fear, may cause you some trouble, but simply come as if you were to see the *No* of that day only, and afterward suddenly decide to stop overnight. I shall send you an old servant of ours on the 15th, when I hope you will tell her whatever you may like to do. The ai (fish) which I have caused to be forwarded to you in separate package is a gift of a friend, which has just arrived; though it is no novelty I beg you to accept it. The weather being irregular, I implore you not to overtax your health. I am afraid the moon will be obscured this evening too.”

The above is a literal translation of an autograph letter of Lord Ii. From the hurried manner of writing it is easy to suppose that the letter was a work of a few moments. But when one reads the original, one can scarcely help being struck with the admirable grace and appealing kindness it expresses. He was so circumspect and careful even in such small matters of private nature, and one

may well see how much more so he must have been when he grappled with important affairs of the nation. With such delicate, affectionate nature Naosuke combined a strong will power, which if once formed, became as indestructible as rock. At one time he ordered the closing up of a licensed quarter in one of his domains in Shimotsuke. Its inhabitants petitioned him to withdraw the veto, since the step, if carried out so suddenly, would produce a far-reaching ill effect. Lord Ii replied that there was always a clear line between what was right and what was wrong, and that he was not the man to deter from doing what he was convinced to be right. He had his command obeyed; and this was the way he always dared to do whatever he believed to be right.

CHAPTER III.

LORD II FAVOURS FOREIGN
INTERCOURSE.

The opening of Japan to foreign intercourse and the name of Lord Ii are so closely associated that we can hardly discuss the one without referring to the other. Strangely enough, however, opinions are divided as to the real part he played in the great drama of fifty years ago. Some say he strongly supported the open door policy, while others contend that, at heart he was a staunch opponent of that policy. But the fact remains, that Lord Ii was directly responsible for the opening of Japan to foreign intercourse and that his daring courage in accomplishing this purpose cost him his life. But whether he actually held the view which his outward action would lead one to infer he espoused, seems to remain a question which has not been satisfactorily answered. It is argued by some modern writers that Lord Ii, like his

contemporaries, was in reality never in favour of opening up the country, but the irresistible foreign pressure brought to bear upon him compelled him against his will to do what he did. Though his wonderful feat in fighting, heart and soul, against the common public opinion and in daring to carry out what others shrank from doing would for ever stand to his credit in the history of Japan, still his personal worth would largely depend on how the above question is finally answered. Let us now inquire into the true state of affairs and see how far these writers are correct in their view.

A little before Lord Ii returned to Yedo in 1853 in response to the sudden call of the Shogun as stated in the previous chapter, he had read a translation of Commodore Perry's state message. Therefore his first mission on his arrival at Yedo was to present a statement of his views regarding the matter to the Shogun. On Sept. 12th 1853 he submitted a brief statement of his

views to the Shogun, which he supplemented with a longer and fuller one on October 1st. Why he went into the trouble of doing the thing in two statements instead of one, will require an explanation.

Many and varied as were opinions then expressed by the different daimyos, they were reducible into one of war or no war. That Lord Ii was a most earnest upholder of peace is clear beyond all doubts from his two statements submitted to the Shogun. Though his advocacy of peace was deep-rooted and unshakable, he did not employ any strong language in his first representation, which may savour of imprudence which might arouse reactionary sentiments. It was characterised by generalities mildly suggesting the advisability of maintaining peace and of receiving with good grace the foreign visitors, while carefully avoiding any semblance of urging great change in the long established policy of the Government. Hence it was that some publicists criticise his

first document as being noncommittal and prevaricating. But in his second statement he expressed himself more explicitly and unreservedly; because the exigencies of the times necessitated it. He dived into the minutest details of the question, and not only advised the Shogun to adopt a policy of peace, but even went so far as to urge its maintenance even in defiance of the traditional law of national seclusion. One must remember that in those feudal days laws left by ancestors were held in the greatest reverence, and that any person who attempted to discard them was regarded as little short of traitor both by the government and people. Lord Ii's aim was to have what he believed to be true and right realized and not to raise his own reputation by talking loudly and bravely as did most of the daimyos. They clamoured for the expulsion of the aliens and declared their readiness to die in the cause of ancestral decree. Therefore Lord Ii wisely adopted a very moderate tone in his first re-

presentation. Besides a representation of a daimyo was regarded not merely as the views of that daimyo himself but as also embodying the wisdom and intelligence of his retainers. And in those days the surviving influence of the dead or ancestors was often as powerful as the living public opinion, and Lord Ii could have only placed himself in an embarrassing position, if he were not tactful in giving expression to sentiments which might possibly offend his retainers at Hikone. Moreover since the Hikone clan actually had the mission of guarding Uraga, Lord Ii's advocacy of peace and foreign intercourse would have invited the undeserved suspicion that Ii Kamon-no-Kami must have been terrified by the formidable appearance of the foreign ships. In these circumstances and also of the brilliant records of his ancestors it must have been very difficult for Lord Ii to alone stand up for peace, when all around clamoured for war. Situated as he was, it was only natural that he should have employed

the softest possible tone in his first representation. As it was, however, the then Prime Minister Lord Abe saw through this and demanded of Lord Ii a fuller and unreserved statement of his views, with the result that the second document was submitted to the Shogun. Thus it will be seen that Lord Ii's motive in making two statements was to soften all round the violence of the shock that might otherwise have been produced by his radical views.

For about one hundred years from the middle of the 16th century Japan remained open to free intercourse with foreign nations; but for two centuries that followed she maintained the contrary policy of seclusion. This fact in itself constitutes a most remarkable episode in the history of the world. But not less remarkable was the system of national defence she adopted during that long period of isolation. Before proceeding, however, it may not be out of place to dwell on the political condition of those

feudal times. The people were divided into four castes, the samurai or the ruling class standing at the top. In the centre of a district or country was the local Daimyo or lord's towering castle, embosomed generally within three moats which formed irregular circles dug one inside the other. The castle always stood within the innermost circle. In the space between the innermost and middle circle lived in grand mansions the lord's relatives and retainers of the highest rank. The retainers above the middle rank had their residence within the outer moat. Outside, the samurai of lower order and tradespeople had each their well defined quarters, while farmers had their homesteads scattered over the surrounding country. The duty of samurai of all ranks was to engage in scholarly pursuits as well as to practice in martial arts, in time of peace and to take up arms in time of war, but to be always ready for any emergency. The tradesmen and farmers were only suffered to follow their occupations in order that they might

supply the aristocratic class, the former, with money and the latter with rice and other agricultural products. What was true of one fief has true also of all others and the whole feudal system lived for an ultimate object of being prepared for war and of carrying it out successfully when one broke out. Yet singularly enough the defence of the Empire as a whole was left in almost total neglect. In other words practically no attention was paid to the question of how to defend the country in case of foreign invasion. If there was any port along the country's encircling coasts which had any defensive accommodation, it was only at Nagasaki. Nagasaki was the sole seat of foreign commerce, and alien visitors were allowed to land at no other place except there. It fell on the fiefs of Nabeshima and Kuroda to alternately quarter their men at Nagasaki for defence service of six months from April to September, each year. From October till March the port was left unguarded. This six months

service corresponded with the trade wind season. For in those days the steamer was unknown, and foreign vessels came to Japan only by taking advantage of the monsoon which prevails during April and September. During the remainder of the year the strong north-easterly wind prevented their coming to the east. Hence the posting of defence force at Nagasaki during the former period and its neglect in the latter. Nagasaki was the only port then open to the limited foreign intercourse, and it was thought that this periodic method of mounting guards was enough for national defence. Japan was then like an easy-going person who slept peacefully at night with the front door of his house closed, but with all the other back gates thrown open.

Sixty seven years prior to the coming of Commodore Perry, a famous scholar, Shihei Hayashi, of Sendai published a book called the "Kaikoku Heidan" or the problem of sea-ward defence in which he pointed out that there were free and con-

tinuous stretch of ocean from Japan to the remotest countries including Holland, that foreign ships had an easy access to Japan from all sides, and that it was ridiculous to think as if well defended Nagasaki meant well defended Japan. He urged the necessity of fortifying and strengthening the defences of Yedo bay. The book attracted a good deal of attention, and when in 1792 Russia sent a ship to Yezo with a mandate to open intercourse with the country, the foresight of its author surprised the nation. The Tokugawa Government then commenced in earnest to take up the problem of coast line defence. As the result they instructed the provincial lords throughout the land to newly establish the forces to defend their seacoast. The successive appearance of Russian ships at Yezo at this time, and the subsequent arrival of a British vessel in Nagasaki already referred to in the first chapter impressed the Government more than ever before with the urgency of effect-

ing efficient coast defence. Thus in the later period of the Tokugawa sway the sea-defence problem was an absorbing topic of study for the authorities, and yet what had resulted was but a slight improvement on the state of things 50 years before.

When Japan was visited by the first westerner about three centuries ago there was not much difference between the advance then attained by Japan in military matters and that prevailing in European nations. In fact the military prowess and courage of the samurai seemed to have inspired the foreigners with no little admiration and dread. It is stated that when Lord Date Masamune, a Christian daimyo, dispatched an envoy to Europe the Spanish Governor General in the East addressed a message to his Government, stating that it would require deep reflection before Spain should open intercourse with so warlike a people as the Japanese. As it happened, however, while Japan was slumbering away her two centuries of peace, war after war en-

sued in Europe and as a natural consequence the art of fighting made such a marvellous progress in the west that in the 19th century Japan found herself far outstripped in this respect. Our forefathers of fifty years ago saw that their old-fashioned guns were powerless against the powerful canon of the modern Europe; the splendid valour of samurai trained to fight hand-to-hand counted for but little before the disciplined and well organised western army.

The true statesman is he who builds his political opinions on actual experience at the same time that he takes into consideration the prevailing social and political conditions. Lord Ii was essentially a statesman of this order. Alone among a host of daimyos, who, more gallant than wise, would talk of war as lightly as they would of a picnic, Lord Ii took a common-sense view of the affair, and retained a perfect equilibrium of mind. The object of the American vessels visiting these shores in those days was entirely pacific: they only sought the

profits of trade and little more. But to those whose life-long object was fighting taught by law and tradition of two centuries to look upon all foreigners in the light of iteki or alien foes, seeking subjugation of their country, the advent of the foreign ships must have not unnaturally seemed as an intolerable augury of national ruin. However sagacious and farseeing, Lord Ii too grew up in the atmosphere of feudalism and had gone through the warlike training of the time. One may not be far beside the mark to infer that even he possessed a degree of anti-alien prejudice and the characteristic love of the samurai for military conquest. Withal he was from the beginning to end the most inexorable advocate of peace. So it cannot be said that his strong aversion to the bellicose policy was due to the lack of courage and valour. But it was because he knew too well the weak condition of his country and the ultimate advantage of foreign trade and intercourse. He did not derive his

views from any mercenary calculations of a tradesman but from his knowledge of things military. His views on the questions of consequence were free, therefore, from hastiness, short-sight, and extravagance which characterised the utterances of others of the time. He wrote in one of his letters to a friend :

“I have often heard people speak of courageous, prompt actions according to the circumstances as being the requisite of the good samurai. But setting aside rare veteran generals, it is extremely difficult for an ordinary person, like myself, to carry out a plan with desired success even after the most elaborate deliberations and thorough study of the matter.”

To know the conditions of western countries was in those days a difficult, almost impossible thing for a Japanese. Were it not so the talk of war would not have been heard so clamorously. Even under such circumstances Lord Ii kept himself informed of foreign powers with wonderful accuracy. When the Government

constructed forts in Shinagawa bay soon after the visit of Commodore Perry, Lord Ii presented a paper to the Shogunate Government, criticising in the severest terms the fruitlessness of the measure and dwelling at length upon the efficient naval power of foreign countries.

If the defence work under the direct jurisdiction of the Shogunate was an imperfect affair, those in other parts of the country were worse. But those upholders of the national dignity, endowed with undue degree of sword-end patriotism left no stone unturned in their endeavours to convince the authorities of the cowardice of yielding to the foreign demands and the feasibility of vanquishing the "foreign invaders." Some went so far as to memorialise the Government of measures by which the foreign ships, however powerful, might easily be annihilated, but which would appear ridiculous even to a little school boy of to-day. In contrast to these unpractical theories Lord Ii's common-sense arguments deserve special

study. He pointed out the lack of ships on the Japanese side large enough to hold efficient guns, and of the slightest hope of victory in coping with the well-trained and well-armed foreign warships and advised the Government to hold over the talk of war until the time the country became strong enough to have reasonably a prospect of victory. If he was absolutely confident of victory he might possibly have been induced to yield to the popular opinion, but it is doubtful that he should even then have assented to any bellicose policy without due provocation, perceiving as he did the advantages of foreign trade.

Lord Ii was a thorough man of business, who saw deeply under the surface of things, and too cool-headed and practical to be carried away by temporary impulses. He once wrote regarding the question of the coast defence: "Several plans regarding the coast-defence have now been adopted; but even if they were meant for mere show founded on the empty

talk of war instead of from actual experiences on the field, they might have been executed a little better. As it is, they would only result in mere waste of money and do more harm than benefit. I hope that only such provisions be made as shall answer the practical needs of the country, and that all ostentatious and fruitless outlay be strictly forbidden.”

On another occasion he wrote: “Those who call loudly for the expulsion of foreigners are regarded by the people as valient soldiers, while those uphold peace are spoken of as being cowardly. The courage of those who talk of war without any hope of victory, in my opinion, may only be likened to the boldness of boars and tigers. Their ferocity emanate from their dread rather than from true valour. Their views are not at all worthy of serious consideration.”

Formerly in the days of sailing boats Japan's safety from foreign invasion was assured by the seas that surrounded the Empire on all sides. But with the coming of the steam-

ship this had all changed. In an autograph letter to the Shogun the King of Holland wrote in 1844: "Since the invention of steamships the distance between one foreign country and another separated by seas has become considerably lessened rendering international intercourse comparatively easy. If Japan would avert the danger of foreign invasion, she should slacken her policy of strict seclusion." About this time disquieting rumour had become current that monstrous steamers might at any day appear in the Japanese waters. In one of his letters written in 1847 Lord Ii says: "Though it is commonly believed that foreign vessels will not come to our shores during the winter season, we cannot be so sure of this; because there is rumour nowadays that a newly-invented 'fire boat' (steamer) is shortly coming to pay us a visit..."

Thus Lord Ii warned the people of the possibility of a foreign vessel putting in an appearance when it was least expected. It was about six

months before he penned the above letter that he was entrusted with the duty of guarding Sagami coast; and his warning was chiefly directed to his retainers whom he placed in charge of the place. The first sighting of the dreaded steamers took place at Uraga when Commodore Perry's fleet arrived there. The reality far exceeded the expectations. Those who saw the American ships were simply amazed. They said the ships moved miraculously with the speed of birds. All doubts as to the reality of the existence of the steamer had now disappeared, and the Tokugawa Government made desperate efforts to strengthen the coast defence. For not the American ships alone, but others began to be sighted in our waters with increasing frequency. Lord Ii attributed this growing frequency to the great progress the foreign nations had attained in the art of navigation and also to great changes that had come over European politics and institutions, and held that any attempt Japan

might make to keep aloof of this surging tide of the world's civilisation would only serve to embroil her in a grave national predicament. In stating this view of the situation Lord Li was quite unequivocal as the following extracts from some of his letters would serve to show:

“As I seriously think over the outlook, I cannot help fancying that things left as they are, there may come a day when this Empire will be placed in the condition of being besieged and of helplessly wasting away with hostile ships completely surrounding us. Such a state of affairs, if actually brought about, would be a most disastrous calamity to the nation.”

“In the face of a grave emergency which now confronts us, if we were still, as in the times gone by, to cling to the ancestral laws of seclusion, I am afraid it would fare us ill; I rather think we should pursue a policy best calculated to maintain the peace of the world and

the integrity and welfare of this nation.”

“Foreign trade is forbidden by the law of the country; but it must be born in mind that the condition of things in the long past and present is not one and the same.”

“If we are to preserve the national honour in consonance with the irresistible trend of affairs at the same time that we expell all fears of alien intrusion and secure the safety of our country, I have no doubt that it will accord with the will of the gods, even though the laws of our ancestors are thereby to be remodelled.”

It is perfectly clear from these extracts that Lord Ii based his views mainly upon the “irresistable trend of affairs,” with a wide range of perview on the political tendencies of the world. On different occasions he also referred to the invention of Steamship. In a message Lord Ii addressed to Lord Nariaki Tokugawa, his most powerful opponent, his lordship said: “The condition of foreign states is not what

it once was; they have invented the steamship, and introduced radical changes in the art of navigation. They have also built up their armies to a state of great efficiency and are possessed of war implements of great power and precision, in short have risen to be formidable powers. If, therefore, we persistently cling to our antiquated systems, heaven only knows what a mighty calamity may befall our Empire.”

It may be noted here that Lord Nariaki Tokugawa, the Lord of Mito, was the most important character after Lord Ii in the history of the opening of Japan to foreign intercourse. He most strongly opposed Lord Ii's policy; and indeed it may be said that the whole history of contentions for and against the opening of the country was the history of the radical differences between the two lords. It was to the sword of Nariaki's subjects that Naosuke finally succumbed. Lord Nariaki represented one of the three noble houses, name-

ly, Kishu, Owari, and Mito which were branches of the Shogunate family, possessing special rank and privileges. Of these "three houses" that of Mito always had the greatest influence in the Shogunate Government by reason of the geographical proximity of Mito to Yedo and of the universally acknowledged sagacity of its lord. When the foreign question loomed into prominence this powerful lord expressed the view that the growing frequency of the visits of foreign vessels was owing to the leniency the Shogunate Government showed in dealing with them, and that, therefore, Japan should then recant all her kid-gloved diplomacy and stop supplying food and fuel and concession to the unbidden callers, and drive away the alien element at all cost and hazard.

Though strongly averse to war Lord Ii was in no wise content with the state of affairs then prevailing. In a representation to the Government he proposed that the wealthy mer-

chants in Osaka, Hyogo and Sakai be given the special privilege of constructing large ships and steamers in order to go abroad with such goods as Japan might spare and open trade in foreign countries.

He added: "Employing Dutch seamen as captains let the Japanese traverse the ocean and master the art of navigation under the name of conducting trade. Let them also observe the systems of foreign navy, so that we might ere long establish an efficient navy of our own. Meanwhile the prevailing tendency toward luxury and wastefulness should be suppressed and replaced by strict economy and simple mode of living, at the same time the national armaments are steadily increased, so as to inspire foreigners with a sense of respect for our arms and valour. Such policies would seem to me the best calculated to rescue the nation from decadence and to ensure the national safety." His idea was to establish what we now call volunteer fleet and train the people in naval activity on the one hand

and to develop the national resources on the other. He further remarked: "Both America and Russia are said to have achieved marked progress in the art of navigation of late years. I see no reason why Japan should not before long be able to beat the westerners in naval efficiency, if she now set about the study of the art in earnest."

Without doubt Lord Ii's advocacy of peace was too deeply rooted to be shaken by any opposition or threat, although it does not seem that he was originally desirous of inviting foreigners into Japan. On the contrary he rather wished to keep foreigners as far off the Japanese shores as possible. In short he was a strong conservative as all other contemporaries were. Conservatism was the life and salvation of the feudal government. It is important, however, to remember that he was not of that class of conservists, who believed that the true end of the conservative policy could be attained by sealing Japan's doors absolutely

against foreigners and by driving them away at the point of the sword whenever they should rap at our doors. A strong advocate of peace and foreign intercourse, he wished to keep Japan as much as possible from the incoming of foreigners. Why was he opposed to the westerners coming into Japan? There were three reasons.

The first was his desire to uphold the nation's dignity. He was fully aware of the rapidly advancing civilisation of the west, and that to shut up his country's door against its influence meant retrogression and national suicide. Japan should associate with the west, if she did not like to fall behind. But to do this meant the violation of the traditional law of the country. But the new combination of circumstances did not, as he so often pointed out, permit the observance of the ancestral law in its entirety. Hence he tried to adopt the middle course of opening the country, while keeping out foreigners. He no doubt thought that

in that way the national dignity could be upheld.

His second reason was to preserve the Bushido of the samurai. It was feared that this Bushido would greatly suffer if foreigners were freely allowed to mingle with the Japanese. With westerners even the monarchs themselves would talk of the advantages of trade in their state messages, whereas in Japan nobody but traders would deign to talk about money matters. The free intercourse of the samurai with these foreigners whose customs and traditions were so diametrically opposed would result only in deteriorating Bushido, and this could not be tolerated.

His third reason was financial. Apart from undesirable commotions, the visit of foreign vessels would occasion enormous disbursement of money. For owing to misunderstandings arising from the language difficulty and to the long established prejudices troubles would take place; and if the past experiences furnished any datum for future expectations, free

foreign intercourse would end in great expenditure of money to the country. The Government had already expended colossal sums of money in coast defence and other measures necessitated by the frequent visit of foreign ships, and was then in great financial embarrassment, and further call on their treasury was more than could be endured.

These three reasons are forcibly stated in many of Lord Ii's writings, and to a statesman of practical turn of mind like he, they must have carried great weight.

As is suggested in the preceding chapter it is undeniable that owing to the long continued peace under the Tokugawa regime the old samurai spirit somewhat deteriorated in the later days of the Shogunate. This was particularly noticeable during the Tempo era (1830-1843). But it was also during this period that literature and fine arts made splendid progress. The sword being sheathed, the samurai had little more to occupy themselves than to think, talk and

write about diverse questions of society and state. Discussion was the order of the day. The battle of the sword was now replaced by the battle of the mouth and pen. Every scholar had his own view and courage to express it. Reforms of institutions were talked about on all sides; the spirit of revolt was rife every where. The reform of the administrative system of Tokugawa Government first proposed by Midzuno Echizen-no-Kami attracted widely public attention and was gradually working itself into prominence, when the problem of foreign intercourse suddenly loomed up on the horizon. The air became filled with a medley of opinions. Some cried for war, others for peace and yet others declared the Government ought to have known better than to plunge the nation into such a plight, and insisted on the reorganization of the whole Government system. Lord Nariaki's stubborn insistence upon war was under such circumstances not inexcusable, especially in this that he was of

opinion that any weak policy on the part of the Government would serve to worsen the already declining Bushido spirit. The difficult situation in which Lord Ii was placed may well be imagined. To carry out his conviction he must first weld chaotic public opinion and bring it on his side. What did he do to effect this purpose? He made an ingenious proposal. In his statement of views he wrote:

“Before taking any decisive step it is most important for the Government to gain the confidence of the public. The most appropriate means for this end, I should think, would be first to report the matter to the throne for its sanction and then request it to dispatch an Imperial envoy to the Great Shrine at Ise and other Imperial shrines in order to invoke the aid of the gods. Further the Shogun may dispatch his representative to Nikko where are buried the remains of Iyeyasu and other Shoguns, for the same purpose. This step would be in perfect accord with the

time-honoured usage of the country and serve to integrate public opinion.”

The Tokugawa Shogunate, it is hardly necessary to explain, was invested practically with sovereign powers by the throne. There are very few instances of the Shogun submitting any political measure to the Emperor for ratification. Even when the Tokugawa Government proclaimed the historic anti-foreign edict of Kan-ei such formality was not observed. Therefore there would have been no impropriety if the Shogunate Government pursued its own policy without referring the matter to the throne. Had Lord Ii been staunch anti-alien advocate and an inveterate disciple of the Shogun who had no thought whatever of the Emperor, as is represented by some modern historians, he would certainly have been the last man to make such a proposal. But he had advised the Government to break the law of the ancestors, and he knew that if his suggestion were to be carried out by the single arbitrary will of the Shogun there was no knowing

what the consequence might be. So he urged them not only to consult the Emperor and the ancestral spirits of the Tokugawa family but, in order to prevent the matter falling entirely into the hands of the officials of the Imperial Court to request an Imperial envoy to be dispatched to Ise to invoke the aid of the Imperial ancestors.

This scheme of Lord Ii, though suggested by the situation of things, had its origin no doubt in his great reverence for the Imperial House. It is to be remembered that the scholars of Japanese classics were invariably upholders of the Imperial cause—it was by persons of such persuasion that the restoration of the imperial authority was first preached. Lord Ii was an earnest student of the Japanese literature. In his Fossil House days he devoted much of his time to the study of Japanese archæology, as his letters to his instructor show. In one of them he said:

“Since last winter I have chiefly spent my time in looking up our ancient literature. I have read through the *Kojiki* and several other books with the result that many passages and points difficult to comprehend presented themselves. I have set down questions in an accompanying volume of which I hope you will give me full explanations at your early convenience.....Nothing exceeds my pleasure in receiving your clear explanations on the queries I submit to you. I shall carefully study the same, and if I should have more doubts I shall put further questions to you. My future endeavours shall be for the unification of the Yamato spirit among the people and for exhorting them to the practice of its ways. The first and most important feature of the Yamato spirit is the reverence and loyalty to the throne.”

LORD II'S ADVISERS.

When Lord Ii was asked by the Shogunate Government to give his

views regarding the question of opening Japan to foreign intercourse he consulted his trusted retainers. There is no doubt that he much profited himself by counsels and suggestions of his subjects, in forming his own. But most of them were of opinion which ran with the popular sentiment of the day, namely, the closing of the ports to foreigners and adhering to the ancestral law to keep out all alien elements with sword and gun. There were very few even among his own followers, who could see below the surface of things and rightly sympathise with what he held to be the best and truest policy. Among these few was one Rokuro Nakagawa, a scholar of Chinese classics, whose convictions precisely coincided with Lord Ii's. The man declared in his representation that since the anti-foreign law was put in force during Kan-ei era, Japan had been quite isolated from the rest of the world and was quite blind as to what was going on in the other parts of the earth. To fight with foreigners with arma-

ments and resources such as she possessed was little short of madness. She must first send her subjects abroad and through them study, assimilate and adopt foreign civilisation before she could think of grappling with foreigners with any prospect of success.

Such being the case Lord Ii caused Rokuro to write his paper (Lord Ii's) to be presented to the Shogun. It seems strange that an old Chinese scholar, like Rokuro, should have entertained such advanced views in defiance of the prevailing opinion, considering how irreconcilably conservative the average Chinese scholar was, the most notable Confucian doctrines being "stick to the old laws," "never despise the laws of your forefathers," "study the old principles and through them learn the new." The paradox was probably due to the fact that Rokuro once paid a visit to Nagasaki. Travelling from one province to another was then a very difficult thing to accomplish. Nagasaki moreover being so closely associated

with affairs foreign, to pay it a visit was like going to a strange country with Dutch ships, Dutch merchants and Dutch books. Rokuro must somehow have learned a good deal of foreign nations during his sojourn at Nagasaki. Be it remembered, however, that those acquainted with the westerner's intellectual and material superiority were not necessarily the advocates of peace and foreign intercourse. The Mito clan is a most conspicuous example. In no other clans had there probably been so many scholars of the Dutch school versed in the affairs of western countries as in Mito. The famous Fujita Toko, who was of the same school as Choei and Kazan was a Mito man. His celebrated book "Hitachi obi" which embodied the views of Nariaki Tokugawa, lord of Mito was diametrically opposed to the policy of open door. The following is an extract from the book:

"His Lordship (Nariaki) says that the opinion supporting the policy of permitting free foreign trade on the

one hand and of making armaments on the other to render Japan powerful enough to cope with the foreigners in future struggles, is nothing but a coward's pretext to temporize with the present—at least during his lifetime. The valiant Hojo slayed the Mongolian envoy on the spot without ado, and our third Shogun burnt foreign ships and crucified their crew.—Their resolute and courageous action was possible because their minds were firmly resolved. So with strong minds, why should we not be able to defend our land against the alien invaders, though our armaments are not quite what we can wish them to be. But have we not already got sufficient arms? Should the foreign trade be permitted the minds of the people would be more and more relaxed, and the time is never likely to come when the national armament will be completed. One might as well invite a thief inside his doors and then begin to plan a thief-proof house. It is so transparent beyond a shadow of doubt that those im-

pudent, cunning foreigners, if once permitted in, will soon begin to preach the 'crooked doctrines' (alien faith) and try to win the hearts of the common people. If we should suddenly find ourselves in a predicament with the minds of our people loosened, our armaments neglected, the foreign religion fast gaining grounds, what possible remedy would there be to reverse this awful state of things?

“The proposal of constructing large vessels in order to dispatch them abroad for tradal purpose sounds admirable. But this, I should think, is the most risky thing conceivable. The Japanese nature is restless, fickle and superficial; so if our countrymen should go to foreign lands and mingle with foreigners, they will only fall into the pernicious state of the proverbial crow trying to whiten its feathers in imitation of the stork. Again the first principle of trade is that it result in the mutual gain. But Japan has all she wants, and there is no need whatever for us of importing foreign goods. Besides all

that is sent from abroad is such as is entirely superfluous and extravagant. We regard the trade already allowed to Dutch merchants with too much solicitude; and if all foreigners be allowed to freely enter our country, we may be sure of our beautiful customs being changed and adulterated in no time. The construction of large ships and naval training under the guise of whaling and transporting merchandise is reasonable enough, but to dispatch our ships to foreign shores for trade should be strictly interdicted.

“To refuse to rescue ship-wrecked foreigners seems inhuman, but the safety of the Empire must not be staked therefor. Instructions should be issued among our fishermen to tell them that those of them who are drifted to foreign lands should give themselves for lost. Foreigner's motive in restoring ship-wrecked Japanese is not entirely due to their sense of humanity; they find in this a good excuse for urging us to concede to their long-cherished desire. For

during the eras of Kan-ei and Kansei, when our military power was at its height no foreigner had ever had sent back any of our ship-wrecked countrymen; though there must have been as many such unfortunates then as there are now."

"We should be, therefore, all the more determined to undeviatingly observe the ways of our ancestors, which is the safest and most dignified policy for the country.

"Thus his Lordship (Nariaki) earnestly insists on the traditional policy of the two first Shoguns of the Tokugawa dynasty."

This book was written nine years prior to the coming of Commodore Perry, when the question of foreign intercourse had not as yet come to widely attract attention.

To recapitulate, though not an advocate of foreign intercourse by his own choice, Lord Ii, keenly alive to the state of things at home and abroad, saw the partial opening of the country and the maintenance of peace with the western powers was the only safe

course for Japan to adopt. At the same time he also knew that to put such a course into practice was going counter with the long established law and prejudices as well as against the prevailing national opinion, which had behind it powerful daimyos. He had to fight even against the views of his own clansmen. It was most important for him to win over public opinion and failing in this to bring on his side some force to counteract. Hence he proposed the unusual step of having recourse to the Imperial Court and of invoking the aid of ancestral spirits. It is extremely interesting that this step of going up to the Emperor in such connection, though, perhaps, little dreamt of by Lord Ii himself then, ultimately proved the first seed sown for bringing the de jure sovereign back to actual power and final collapse of the Tokugawa regime.

CHAPTER IV.

LORD II SETS EARNESTLY TO
WORK.

The true worth of a statesman consists more in his capacity of action than in the mere profession of views, however far-seeing and admirable they may be. But situated as he was—his position under the Shogun was then like that of the Privy Councillor—it was unavoidable that Lord be confined his efforts to the mere declaration of views without rendering further service in carrying them into operation. Nevertheless he had strong self-confidence, and was a man of affairs, never content until what he was convinced to be right was put into practice. It was no wonder, then, that he finally worked himself up to the position of the highest responsibility of Tairo.

Five years intervened between the advent of Commodore Perry and Lord II's appointment as Tairo.

This interval was one of great importance as developing a striking change in the political situation. To have a clear grasp of the significance of this change it will be well to dwell here on the different elements which kept agoing the machinery of government under the Shogunate regime.

There were three distinct political bodies composing the Shogunate Government. The first was the *Goyo-beya*, or the office chamber, which corresponded to the Cabinet of our day. The second was the *Go-sanke* or the three branches of the House of Tokugawa, already referred to. The third was the *Tamarinoma-dzume*, or ante chamber bureau, which was a sort of privy council to the Shogun. The first was of course purely an executive organ, while the second had originally no political significance, being established by Iyeyasu for the purpose of preventing the extinction of the Tokugawa lineage. Nor was the *Tamarinoma-dzume* properly invested with any political powers; seats in the antechamber being given to those

retainer lords of the Shogun, who either by virtue of their ancestors' distinguished service or by their own meritorious service were permitted to occupy seat in it as honorary distinction. But partly owing to the high rank held by the daimyos composing it and partly to the declining influence of the Cabinet the last two gradually obtained political power, especially after the visit of Commodore Perry. The occupants of the *Goyo-beya* were called *roju* or elders. Some of the *Tamarinoma-dzume* lords had the honour of being elevated to the *Goyo-beya*; but the office Tairo never fell on any but those coming of distinguished families referred to already. Compared with the *roju*, the "three houses" were in a quite irresponsible position, not being regular attendants in the Government. A majority of the *Tamarinoma-dzume* lords were in favour of peace, doubtlessly due to the earnest canvassing of Lord Ii. Of the entire members, nine in all, the one who had the warmest sympathy with Lord Ii's opinions was Lord Hotta

Bitchu-no-Kami, who was the oldest in age. Ii and Hotta intimately associated with each other frequently exchanged their political views in which both agreed perfectly. These two were the central figures around which rallied advocates of the peace policy. Lord Nariaki, baron of Mito, representing, as he did, the most powerful of the "three honourable houses," his strong antagonism to Lord Ii's views naturally drew the views of the two other houses on his side. Consequently the *gosanke* and *tamarinoma* occasioned in the later Shogunate days a most bitter and relentless feud, and whenever a general council was held in the Government there was a very animated discussion between the Lord of Mito and his followers on the one hand and the Lord of Hikone, Lord Hotta and other *roju* on the other. It is regrettable that there was no documentary report kept of these interesting councils; but from the diary kept by a retainer of Lord Nariaki some glimpse may be obtained as regards the great warmth that characterised those debates.

The following is a passage from the diary:

“His Lordship (Nariaki) returned from the court late at night. Controversy of a most animated and protracted nature took place. The majority of the *Tamarinoma-dzume* lords supported the opening of foreign trade. Lord Ii was the most obdurate advocate of the ‘wicked proposition.’” This bitter political animosity between the lord of Mito and the lord of Hikone not unnaturally produced a similar feeling of enmity between the two clansmen, each regarding the other in the light of sworn enemies. Rumour was circulated by a clansman of Mito that Lord Ii was actually intriguing to expell Lord Nariaki from the Government and rise himself to the post of Tairo in order to carry out his own plans. Both Lord Ii’s sense of honour and his character are sufficient to prove that he was the last man to be guilty of such baseness, but the fact that such rumour was eagerly seized upon with avidity would show the wonderful political influence Lord Ii

secured in so short a time as less than five years.

Amidst this political duel between these two powerful lords, the one who was placed in the most trying position was no other than Lord Abe, for he then held the post of Chief Lord of the *goyobeya*, or of the Prime Minister. He had to listen both to the *gosanke* and *tamarinoma* and was sandwiched in between the two contending forces.

There were two distinct phases in the opening of Japan to foreign intercourse, so also were there two phases in the negotiations between the Shogun's Government and the Imperial Court pertaining thereto. The treaty of amity concluded with Commodore Perry and that of commerce which followed it five years later were the two stages in question. Though in the latter case there was considerable misunderstanding between the Imperial Court and the Shogunate Government yet in the former the Emperor not only approved Lord Ii's decisive action but honoured him with

two gracious messages, applauding the propriety of the steps taken by him. It was often asserted that the throne was strongly opposed to the Shogunate policy in concluding the treaty with the United States and that it even instructed the Government to adopt anti-foreign policy. But the allegation was unfounded.

It is worthy of special attention that this was at the time when the Shogunate Government rendered utmost endeavours for the protection of the Imperial Court and that Lord Ii was commissioned with this honourable duty. This honour was conferred upon Lord Ii after the American fleet had left Japan on the conclusion of the treaty. About this time Lord Ii was relieved of the duty of guarding the coast of Uraga which he had discharged very faithfully, though not without some amount of chafing. Lord Ii's satisfaction on being entrusted with the office of protecting Kyoto is visible in the following lines which occur in one of his letters to a friend: "Nothing can exceed the honour of

our family than this privilege. I can well tell how rejoiced all my clansmen will be at this turn of affairs. It will doubtlessly contribute largely to the smooth government of our clan. It is an honour far too great for me to merit; and I am filled with inexpressible feeling of gratitude. For the first time in my life I can go back to my home with the full satisfaction of one who returns to his native place clad in silk brocade.”

Lord Ii was then going home to Hikone and the journey was the most pleasant and delightful he had ever made since he entered on his public career. As he was nearing his native place a most startling piece of news reached him. Fire had broken out in Kyoto and the Imperial Palace had been reduced to ashes, the Emperor barely escaping with life. Lord Ii immediately caused a strong force of his men to proceed to Kyoto to guard His Majesty's person. He also presented the Emperor with large quantities of silks and sundry other articles for the comfort of the Court.

His service to the throne on the occasion of this great calamity was characterised by his wonted loyalty and thoroughness. The Emperor's satisfaction was boundless and His Majesty ordered several messages expressive of high appreciation to be addressed to Lord Ii, who did not stop at sending presents but increased the Imperial guards out of his own clansmen, in order to insure the safety of the Court. On one occasion hearing of the Emperor's partiality for reading, Lord Ii presented several volumes beautifully bound to His Majesty and on another a number of small carvings of fine workmanship for which also the sovereign had great liking. Thus in every possible way Lord Ii endeavoured to contribute to the security and comfort of the Imperial House, and the Emperor was even pleased to grant him a personal gift. There are many documents, still extant, which bear testimony to the beautiful relations which existed between the grateful Emperor and this loyal servant.

But alas! some years later this same loyal servant had the painful duty thrust into his hands of signing a commercial treaty, without the Emperor's sanction to the considerable pain of the Imperial mind.

HOTTA BITCHU-NO-KAMI.

To illustrate what influence the *tamari-no-ma* lords had come to wield over the *gosanke*, about this time it is necessary here to refer to an unexpected change which took place in the Shogunate Government. It was no other than the appointment of Lord Hotta to the chief post in the Cabinet.

At the time of Commodore Perry's visit to Uraga, Lord Nariaki had already retired from the lordship of his fief leaving the office to his son. Thus out of office as his lordship was, the then Prime Minister continued to consult him frequently regarding pressing questions of the state, in view of his strong influence among many daimyos

and of his established reputation for statesmanship. At this juncture the Shogun of the day died. Lord Nariaki was then recommended by Lord Matsudaira Echizen to a post which practically amounted to a regency for the succeeding young Shogun. Lord Abe welcomed the proposal: because the influence of the Cabinet was already on the wane and as this recommendation, if acted upon, would certainly result in restrengthening it. Lord Nariaki was then duly installed as the most important member in the Shogunate Government. But instead of his policy being followed as ought to have been, almost every measure he proposed received no support from the Government and instead many others quite antagonistic to his views were steadily carried into effect. Lord Nariaki's vexation led him to express his wishes of resignation but his friends employed every possible means to detain him. After the American visit affair his opinions were more than ever ignored, while the actual governing power devolved into the

hands of the ante-chamber lords. Lord Nariaki could no longer stand the situation. He now absolutely refused to present himself at the Shogunate court and asked Premier Abe to be relieved of his office on the ground of his incompetency to grapple with the difficult political situation. But his request was not granted.

In July 1854 at the pressing entreaty of Lord Abe, Lord Nariaki was induced to reappear in the Government, but there was little sign of his views being respected. The influence of two cabinet members Idzumi-no-kami and Iga-no-kami, who were of the same school as Lord Ii and, who, therefore, may be said to have represented the ante-chamber lords in the Ministry, were so powerful that Lord Nariakai's position was reduced to no better than that of a scare crow. Lord Ii who was then at Hikone kept up constant correspondence with Idzumi-no-kami and Iga-no-kami, who, therefore, may be said to have represented his views. This disagreement between the Cabinet and

Lord Nariaki was in other words the indirect battle between Lord Nariaki and the ante-chamber lords.

Lord Nariaki became firmly convinced that so long as the ante-chamber was represented in the Cabinet, he would never be able to put his political views into practice. He addressed, therefore, letters to Lord Abe, insisting upon the immediate dismissal of Idzumi-no-kami and Iga-no-kami. In the concluding part of one of these epistles, he wrote: "If you deem it impossible to carry out my suggestion, I would advise you to resign your post. Then I will show the courage to follow your example." Lord Abe then acted on Lord Nariaki's advice and expelled from the Cabinet the two representatives of the Lord Ii's influence. In a subsequent letter to Lord Abe, when the question of appointing successors to the two came up for discussion, Lord Nariaki remarked: "In my opinion Lord Hotta (Lord Ii's intimate friend), is not the man to be appointed to any post of respon-

sibility. As regards Ii himself, he is totally out of the question.”

The entire power of the Government had at length fallen into Lord Nariaki's hands. This change took place on August 4th, 1855. The ante-chamber lords could no longer have a voice in the administration of the country. Had this state of affairs long continued, the subsequent history of Japan might have had different course of events to record. Lord Nariaki, now practically the head of the government was in no wise hampered in the pursuance of his policy—rigorous anti-foreign policy. Not long after this, however, Japan had to enter on important negotiations with the United States for concluding the second treaty of commerce. And on October 9th of the same year the news came like a thunder-bolt, announcing the sudden appointment of Lord Hotta Bitchu to the Cabinet. Lord Nariaki rubbed his eyes in utter bewilderment, and his wonderment gradually worked itself into despair.

Yet he could not solve the mystery of the situation. He at once wrote to Lord Matsudaira Echizen, who at the time represented the House of Kishu one of the *gosanke* as follows: “I am utterly at a loss to comprehend by whose recommendation this appointment took place. It is strongly biassed for foreign intercourse; both Abe and myself hate him. Whenever a *roju* is appointed, we, “the three houses” are usually consulted, but the present appointment has been made without the slightest knowledge of Chunagon.” (the lord of Mito, his son).

Lord Hotta's unexpected entry into the Cabinet occasioned a great sensation among the daimyos and provoked many weird conjectures as to the cause of the appointment. Among others the shrewd Lord of Satsuma said:— “This selection must be due to the machination of Ii and his confederates of the ante-chamber.” And Lord Satsuma was right. Lord Hotta's election was a revenge of the ante-chamber lords on Lord Nariaki for

the dismissal of their two representatives.

Lord Hotta belonged to a family of proud lineage and enjoyed a very large income. He had now become the head of the Cabinet, and Lord Nariaki could no longer have his way as he did for a while. Thanks however to the conciliatory attitude of Lord Abe, the relations of Lord Nariaki with the Cabinet were barely sustained, though his influence was not at all what it had been for the few months previous.

TOWNSEND HARRIS AND NEGOTIATIONS ON COMMERCIAL TREATY.

Although Commodore Perry's success in concluding the first treaty of amity with Japan awakened the nation from its slumber of two and a half centuries, yet his visit left no agreeable impression in the minds of the people in general. They were perhaps more scared by the occurrence than convinced of the friendly sentiment professed by America. The

visit of Townsend Harris opened, however, a new phase in the diplomatic relations of this country with the United States. It is true that many a fierce political battle was fought after his visit, and many a precious life sacrificed at its altar. But the long-prevailing habit of regarding the westerners with bellicose enmity was at last practically stamped out of the minds of the people, chiefly by patient efforts of this able American diplomat.

Townsend Harris appointed consul general to Japan arrived at Shimoda from China on August 21st, 1856 and proceeded to Yedo, where after considerable amount of discussions and negotiations lasting over a year, he was received in audience by the Shogun, and entered on the formal negotiations with the Government regarding the conclusion of a commercial treaty.

When the question as to whether Harris should be permitted to the presence of Shogun came up for discussion, the Cabinet became divided

one camp saying yes and the other no. As may have been expected Lord Abe opposed it, while Lord Hotta approved. The latter's influence proved predominant in the Cabinet as his views were supported by a majority of its members and the decision was given in his favour. In September Lord Hotta was appointed the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

At this juncture an incident took place which not a little affected the nerves of the statesmen. It was no other than private advices from the Dutch Consul at Nagasaki that England not content with a treaty of amity decided to dispatch the governor-general of Hongkong, Mr. Bowling to Japan to open negotiations for a treaty of commerce, which if rejected by Japan would entail consequences disastrous to her.

Great Britain's arrogance vis-a-vis China had already caused a very disquieting sensation in Japan so that this fresh warning of the Dutch con-

sul added considerably more to the nervousness of the Government.

Lord Hotta, when put in sole charge of foreign affairs, addressed messages to all the clan lords, bidding them to state their views as to what should be Japan's policy under the circumstances. In one of his epistles in this connection the following passage occurs.

“I presume the opening the country for foreign trade is one scheme very eminently fitted to increasing wealth and armaments on the profits of foreign trade in the prevailing circumstances.”

From this it will be seen that the pacific policy of the Cabinet was now definitely fixed, exactly on the same lines as the policy proposed by Lord Ii three years before. Out of twelve clauses contained in Lord Hotta's communication to the clan lords the first ran as follows.

“Whether our intercourse with foreign nations should be conducted with neighbourly feeling of good will or with that of enmity, regarding them

as our enemies?" Though perfectly simple, the question constituted at the time the most important problem upon which the fate of the Empire hinged. It was one that should have been satisfactorily solved at the time of Commodore Perry's visit, but in reality it was not.

While the negotiations were in progress between the Government and the American Consul a report came from China that Englishmen burnt the Chinese quarters in Canton. This intelligence added still more to the difficulty of the Japanese statesmen.

In July, 1857 Lord Abe died, leaving the premiership now entirely in the hands of Lord Hotta. Lord Ii who was at this time in Hikone was summoned to Yedo, his counsel being in great need by the Cabinet in view of many hard problems. In September he came up to Yedo and carefully studied the proposal of Townsend Harris. In compliance with the demand of the Cabinet, Lord Ii

submitted his views to the following purpose:

“If we can manage to reject the American demands, nothing would be more auspicious. But I deem this impossible. Therefore if we accede to the establishment of the American Legation in Japan, it should be on condition that its establishment be postponed until a Japanese legation is established in the United States. Also let the American Consul convey the same condition to Great Britain.

“If even this should prove impossible there would be no other way than to submit to his demand on the spot. For if we were compelled to open arms, the result would be a decided disadvantage to our side.

“The site of the legation should if possible be chosen outside of Yedo. The defence of the coast should never be neglected in the meanwhile.”

In adopting such a mild tone Lord Ii had no other motive than to avoid giving any offence to the prejudice of the people. In the state message Lord Ii proposed to address to the

President of the United States, the following passage was inserted: “As your envoy is well aware such a procedure (the establishment of a foreign legation) being quite unprecedented in this country, if it were carried out immediately there would be no small amount of opposition and agitation in some quarters of our society: so we hope you will give us time until our public opinion shall have been unified and then we shall be in the position to dispatch to your country our own minister.”

Lord Li also wrote a letter which he proposed to send to Mr. Harris, from which the following passage may be extracted:—

“We are also much indebted to you for your suggestions concerning Great Britain. We must, however, remind you that even if she should send her envoy now, we are not in the condition to give him an immediate answer. We would therefore request her to postpone his dispatch until our national policy is decided with our public opinion integrated.”

Meanwhile Lord Hotta conducted the negotiations with Townsend Harris along the same line of policy as Lord Ii expressed in the above letters. After 13 interviews a treaty of commerce was at last concluded. While the negotiations were in progress the Cabinet dispatched a representative to Kyoto to report the proceedings to the throne, when it was unexpectedly discovered that the attitude of the Emperor towards the Shogunate Government which had hitherto been one of the utmost good will and confidence had now undergone a complete change, owing to sinister influences brought to bear on the Imperial Court.

That this counteracting movement had been carried on by Lord Nariaki was plain beyond all doubt. Since Premier Lord Hotta had been placed in charge of the foreign affairs, Lord Nariaki had no longer the slightest hope of his view being adopted by the Shogunate Government. Besides his bitterest enemy, Iga-no-kami, whom he formerly expelled from

the Cabinet was now reinstalled. In his indignation Lord Nariaki simply refused to appear in the Shogunate Court and the Government also forbade him to do so. By that time Townsend Harris had come and negotiations for the treaty were actually commenced under the very nose of the Shogunate. Lord Nariaki lost all his patience. When, once, the Shogunate Government dispatched a delegate to Lord Mito's in Yedo to report the progress of the negotiations, Lord Nariaki, exclaimed in a fit of anger:

“Let Bitchu and Iga commit harakiri, and decapitate Harris at once.” His hope of having his voice heard in Yedo being entirely gone Lord Nariaki dispatched his retainers to Kyoto to win over the assistance of the throne on his side. When the Shogunate delegates reached Kyoto, the influence of the Mito party had already had the upper hand in the Imperial Court leaving little chance for the fulfilment of their mission. They reported the matter to Yedo.

The Shogunate was astonished. In view of the gravity of situation Premier Lord Hotta himself went up to Kyoto to unravel the illusion with which the Mito party enshrouded the throne. Nor did Lord Ii remain a silent spectator of this dangerous conflict of views between the Shogunate and the throne. He sent his confidant, Yoshitoki Nagano to Kyoto with the double mission of stating the real circumstances of the affair privately to the Grand Vizier of the Imperial Court on the one hand and of secretly watching the movements of the Mito party on the other. Lord Ii in time learned that the Mito party had approached the throne with three proposals of vital consequence. They were, first, the duty of guarding Kyoto be transferred to Mito, Lord Nariaki's son; secondly that the throne assume the most rigid attitude against the foreign intercourse question; and thirdly that the throne decree the Shogunate to appoint one of Lord Nariaki's sons Lord Hitotsubashi heir to the Shogun.

About this time rumour came to be circulated in Yedo that Lord Ii had secretly dispatched Yoshitoki to Kyoto. On the other hand, ignorant of foreign affairs the Court officials and people of Kyoto were now greatly inclined to approve of the counsel of the Mito clan. Consequently Premier Lord Hotta's visit to Kyoto was attended with but scant success. Lord Ii now addressed two messages, one to the Shogunate Government and the other to the Grand Vizier at Kyoto, saying that the Imperial sanction and approval regarding the Shogunate policy had already been obtained and it would simply serve to complicate affairs and thwart the true intentions of the throne, and the purposes of the Shogunate Government hitherto pursued, if divers views offered by different clans be now listened to seriously. Lord Hotta returned to Yedo on June 1st 1858, and three days after Lord Ii was appointed to the position of the highest responsibility in the Shogunate Government namely Tairo.

CHAPTER V.

LORD II MOULDS THE NATIONAL DESTINY.

The reader must already be well aware that Lord Ii's appointment to Tairoship took place precisely at the moment when the Tokugawa Government stood in sore need of the services of a statesman of great foresight and resolution to meet the greatest problem Japan had ever faced,—a man who would dare to face mountains of difficulties with calm fortitude amidst the roar and tumult of contending forces and willingly lay down his life in the cause of his country.

The complexities of the political world were now at their climax. Not only the *Goyobeya*, the *Tamari-noma-dzume* and the *Go-sanke* but all the clan lords, and their retainers had now come to evince the most intense interest in the political questions of the hour. Yedo was no longer the

sole centre of political commotion; the centre had gradually and steadily swung toward Kyoto, the influence of which could no longer be ignored or despised. Added to the momentous problem of commercial treaty, there now arose the question of appointing an heir to the Shogun. The question of unbarring the country for foreign commerce unlike the one which was presented at the time of Commodore Perry's visit, was not confined to the opening of a single port but meant the opening of many. It was one, which if unwisely handled might have seriously affected the future of the Empire. Under these circumstances, it is not difficult to imagine with what strong determination Lord Ii had risen to accept the Shogun's offer of the post of Tairo. As was already stated the office of Tairo was an exceptional one which existed only in times of a grave national emergency. The Tairo was invested with plenary powers as far as any given business particular nature was concerned, while the

routine business of the Shogunate Government was left to the Cabinet Ministers. But Lord Ii as Tairo altogether disregarded this precedent and frequently appeared in the Shogunate Court to supervise even the smallest affairs of the Government, so that he combined in himself the duties of both Tairo and Prime Minister. Again it was an established rule that, when a tairo was newly appointed he undergo a sort of preparatory training by retaining his seat for a certain period of time in the Cabinet. But Lord Ii took into his hand the conduct of affairs on the very day he was appointed.

This memorable appointment took place on June 4, 1858. After quitting the Shogun's presence Lord Ii retired to the Cabinet, where he expressed to the Ministers his wish to decline the honour, pleading his incompetency for the post. But the Ministers insisted on his accepting the appointment. Thereupon Lord Ii took the highest seat and formally received the congratulations of the

Ministers and other officials. This formality over, Lord Ii astonished the whole assembly by at once taking in hand the pressing questions of the day—a proceeding unknown in the history of tairoship.

The first question Lord Ii placed on the tapis was whether the Imperial message which Lord Hotta had brought back from Kyoto should be made public. Much opposition was offered on the ground that the step was premature. Lord Ii insisted that it should be and had his way. Copies of the message were then distributed among the clan lords. The purport of this message was that the signing of the commercial treaty with the United States being too serious an affair the views of the clan lords and nobles in general should be consulted once more. If no decision could be arrived at even then, His Majesty would proceed to the Imperial shrines to invoke the aid of the gods.

It was almost universally urged that in signing a provisional treaty with America Lord Ii had deliberately

acted in defiance of the will of the Emperor.

This charge was utterly groundless. He was only compelled to omit the formality of reporting the matter to the throne before he carried it into practice. If the Emperor were an advocate of war and Lord Ii that of the policy of peace, then this charge might have been sustainable. But that His Majesty was strongly in favour of peace does not admit a shadow of doubt in the light of several Imperial messages, and the charge falls to the ground.

Lord Ii now exerted himself in three directions. First he dispatched his most trusted friend and retainer Yoshitoki to Kyoto in order to lay before the throne a full statement of the situation in Yedo. Secondly he instructed Lord Hotta and other officials to interview Townsend Harris and urge him to postpone the date of formally signing the treaty. Thirdly with the object of unifying the views of the clan lords, he himself interviewed many of them to convince

them of the unavailability of the policy he had chosen.

Fortunately Townsend Harris was prevailed on waiting for three months, and the lords to offer no opposition to the Government outwardly at least. If this fortunate state of affairs lasted long, Lord Li would have secured the Imperial sanction in time and there would have occurred no commotion which as a matter of fact followed. But uncontrollable circumstances soon occasioned by the urgent pressure from foreign nations completely upset his programme, and threw the political situation into a chaos of agitation.

The American envoy after consenting to Lord Li's proposal had retired to Shimoda, and was quietly waiting for the expiration of the stipulated term, when two American vessels suddenly arrived from Shanghai with a startling piece of news. It said that Great Britain and France had attacked Tientsin, that China bowed down before them and begged for peace, and that the conquerors were now

coming to Japan to demand the opening of the country. Townsend Harris at once addressed a message to Lord Hotta, urging the immediate renewal of the negotiations. He warned that a very grave state of affairs was now staring Japan in the face and that she should sign the treaty at once with the United States so as to avert any danger of the foreign Powers making inordinate demands. A special conference was then held in the large hall of the Government. The majority of the Cabinet were in favour of signing the treaty at once in compliance with Harris' friendly suggestion; since it would impair the national dignity, if Japan were compelled by the intimidation of France and England to sign a treaty with them. But Lord Ii protested that it should be postponed until the Imperial sanction be obtained, and he held his ground. His firm attitude was later misinterpreted in the sense that he had suddenly changed his mind and was inclined for an anti-foreign policy. This is

a most ridiculous insinuation. Why then did Lord Ii so stubbornly persist on the postponement? It was in this way. Though the Cabinet Ministers nearly all abandoned all hope of obtaining the needed Imperial sanction, Lord Ii alone was confident of securing it through the assistance of the Grand Vizier, who was a great friend of his, if only sufficient time was allowed. Besides he was also fully aware of the strong influence his enemies would certainly put into activity the moment he dared to sign the treaty without the sanction from Kyoto. Furthermore most of the clan lords who apparently did not object to the Government policy were in reality viewing the Shogunate administration with eyes of distrust. They would not be slow to rebel against Lord Ii, if there were any chance for it. Lord Ii as Tairo meant the complete frustration of the plans of Lord Nariaki and his followers who insisted on appointing his (Lord Nariaki's) son Lord Hitotsubashi heir.

to the Shogun. They therefore left no means untried in trying to drag Lord Ii off the seat of Tairo. If this plot succeeded and Lord Hitotsubashi were made the heir of Shogun, the influence of Mito House would naturally predominate in the Government, and the result would have been the enforcement of a radical anti-foreign policy. Lord Ii therefore recommended the young Lord of Kii, both on account of the nearness of consanguinity and of the preference of the Shogun himself. Under such circumstances if Lord Ii was imprudent enough to conclude the treaty without the formal Imperial sanction, though he perfectly knew that the Government policy accorded with the Emperor's will, it would certainly furnish his enemies with a fresh ground of attack on his ministry, and completely upset the line of policy he had so painstakingly followed hitherto. For these reasons Lord Ii staunchly held to his view of postponing the signing. But the combined voice of the Cabinet was so powerfully

opposed to him that at last he had to retire to the ministerial chamber, promising his reply after due consideration. After a while he summoned two of the Commissioners of Negotiations and instructed them to urge Harris as much as possible to consent to the postponement, and if their effort should fail then to sign the treaty at all hazards. This conference occurred on July 29th 1858. On going home that day, Lord Ii called together his principal retainers and related to them what had occurred at the Court. They were all astonished at the turn of affair and sought their master to countermand the order to sign the treaty, come what might, lest some dire calamity might befall the historic Ii family. But, no, said Lord Ii, insisting that the family interests must not interfere with state affairs. This was the memorable day on which Lord Ii made a resolution of the most vital consequence, which subsequently caused a fierce political upheaval culminating in the tragic

sacrifice of his own life. He knew all what this resolution would cost him, but his mind once made up he was ready to bear the entire responsibility on his own shoulders.

Two days later Lord Ii was informed at the Shogunate Court that the treaty was duly signed, all the efforts to secure postponement proving in vain. The treaty was signed on the condition that the President of the United States would guarantee that the safety and integrity of Japan should not be molested by any other foreign nations. It consisted of 14 clauses, stipulating perpetual friendly intercourse between the United States and Japan; the establishment of legations in the respective countries; the establishment of consulates in the ports; the free travelling of Minister and consuls in the land; the friendly intercession of the United States in case Japan should be involved in any trouble with foreign countries; the closing of Shimoda port, and opening in its place that of Kanagawa, Nagasaki, Niigata, Hyogo,

Yedo, Osaka; the free intercourse of the two peoples without official interferences; the freedom of faith; the prohibition of importing opium, etc, etc. Seven clauses regarding trade were also appended. It was further agreed that the treaty be enforced on and after July 4th 1859, even though the ratification of the Emperor or the President was not obtained by that time.

The week immediately following the signing of the treaty was the most painful and yet glorious period in Lord Ii's life.

His plan to get armed with the Imperial sanction had failed. His enemies now gained new force and came upon him like a roaring lion. Lord Ii apprehensive of involving the Shogun himself in the possible calamity, thought it advisable to resign his post, and sent his spies among his opponents to be informed of their movements. The emissaries reported a serious turn of events. It was ascertained that Lord Ii's enemies were now conspiring not only to expell

him from the Government but also to remove the Shogun himself on the charge of having incurred Imperial displeasure. The Shogun was to be replaced by Lord Hitotsubashi, Lord Nariaki's son, and to appoint Matsudaira Echizen-no-kami Tairo. In the face of such audacious plottings Lord Ii could no longer think of resigning. He determined to remain in office and stand by the Shogun at the peril of his life. To meet the formidable enemy now preparing to take him by surprise Lord Ii deemed it necessary to solidify the basis of the Cabinet. With this point in view he boldly relieved Lord Hotta, and Lord Matsudairo (Iga-no-kami), two of his personal friends, of their office, because he saw in the former some vacillation of mind and in the latter peculiar eccentricities liable to make him unpopular.

Lord Ii's enemies now commenced their open campaign. Lord Nariaki sent a letter to the Tairo warning him of grave consequences which would ensue, if the Tairo should sign the trea-

ty without Imperial permit, pretending as if he (Lord Nariaki) never knew that the signing of the treaty had become then an accomplished fact. The epistle further said: “If you should dare to conclude the treaty without receiving Imperial sanction you would be guilty of disregarding the great principles of revering the throne set by the ancestors of the Tokugawa family. Therefore I suggest that a delegate of the Government be at once dispatched to Kyoto to ascertain His Majesty’s pleasure about the question. Regarding the establishment of legation in this country and the free intercourse of the people, neither should ever be allowed; but if the American envoy should insist they should be permitted ten or fifteen years after—or,—till the opinion of the public should be ripe for such steps.”

On the following day August 1st all the clan lords were summoned to the Shogunate Court and apprised of the whole proceedings appertaining to the signing of the treaty. To the

three branches of Tokugawa family the matter was also made known. As regards the significant letter of Lord Nariaki, Lord Ii wrote a detailed answer. He also dispatched a message to the Lord of Kii, apprising him of the Shogunate intention to appoint a member of his family heir to the Shogun on the 4th August. Now the consolidation of the Cabinet was quite accomplished and the question of the Shogun's heirship practically solved. There was little more to do except for the Government to await the open attack of the coterie headed by Lord Nariaki.

On the following day August 3rd, 1858, took place in the grand parlour of the Shogunate Court the famous, historic interview between the two great rival leaders—Lord Naosuke Ii Tairo and Lord Nariaki, or Rekko of Mito.

Lord Nariaki's anger was boundless when he heard that Lord Ii had decided on the appointment of the lordling of Kii as heir to the Shogun. The news reached his ears on the

2nd of August. He immediately called upon Lord Matsudaira (feudal lord of Echizen) and asked him to accompany him to the Shogunate Court on the 3rd to reprimand the Tairo and the Cabinet for their outrageous conduct. Early on the morning of the 3rd Echizen-no-Kami before proceeding to the court repaired to the residence of Lord Ii. He earnestly pointed out the ill-advisability of the step decided upon by the Tairo in connection with the signing of the treaty, and also the desirability of postponing the announcement about the Shogunate heirship. Time sped quickly and Lord Ii stood up to repair to the court in the midst of Lord Matsudaira's remonstrances. Lord Matsudaira entreated him to refrain but he would not hear. In his desperation Lord Matsudaira held Lord Ii by the sleeve; Lord Ii jerked it and left the room with a determined air when a part of his sleeve was torn. Lord Ii hurried to the court, Lord Matsudaira following closely after him.

Lord Nariaki reached the court at about 10.30 a.m. His appearance at the vestibule was marked by a loud and indignant exclamation to the effect that he was not going to quit the court until he compelled Lord Ii to commit harakiri that day. He was soon followed by the two lords namely Lords Mito and Owari. The officials and servants of the court were fluttered at this sudden appearance in the court of the three distinguished nobles. For certain days were fixed in those days for the appearance in the court of the *Go-sanke* lords except under some extraordinary circumstances; so that their present uninvited appearance could portend to them nothing short of an ominous event. Their arrival was at once reported to the Cabinet; the Ministers thereupon put their heads together as to how they should deal with Lord Nariaki, whose aspect was menacing. They jointly advised the Tairo not to meet him personally. Lord Ii, however, rejected their counsel, saying that his non-

appearance might be taken for cowardice.

An interview took place. Lord Nariaki was the first to open the mouth, saying:

“Is it not a flagrant defiance of the Imperial will to sign the treaty with no sanction from the throne?”

Lord Ii expected as much. He painstakingly explained how the pressing need of the time had necessitated the measure, and that the Government's policy was in perfect accord with the Emperor's will, etc. He dwelt upon this point so eloquently that Lord Nariaki could find not a word of retort. In his perplexity the latter loudly called for Lord Matsudaira, who was in the adjoining chamber. Lord Ii, however, interrupted the ex-Lord of Mito reminding him that Lord Matsudaira was not entitled to appear in the parlour.

The Lord of Owari, hitherto a mute spectator, now lost his patience and confronted Lord Ii with a point-blank ejaculation:

“Lord Hitotsubashi should be appointed the Shogun’s heir.”

Lord Ii replied that that was a matter which entirely rested with the will of the Shogun himself and he was quite powerless in the affair.

“Then I will see the Shogun at once and get his personal views on the matter.”

Lord Ii answered that the Shogun was indisposed and would grant audience to no one, “Besides,” Lord Ii continued, “the Shogun has already decided to appoint the young Lord of Kii to the heirship, and the fact is to be announced to-morrow; so that any attempt at interference at this moment will prove futile.”

Lord Nariaki stepped in again:

“The Government should explain their recent arbitrary procedure and show their sense of compunction by withholding the intended announcement about the Shogunate heirship, until the Imperial sanction is obtained for the signing of the treaty.”

Tairo Lord Ii’s reply was that there existed not the least doubt but that

the sanction would be given when full circumstances were laid before the throne, and that His Majesty would also entirely approve of the Government's decision about the heirship being announced without loss of time.

“Why do you not send a governmental delegate to Kyoto for the purpose?”

“Lord Manabe of *Goyobeya* will start shortly.”

“Lord Matsudaira,” resumed Lord Nariaki, “is a capable statesman; he should be appointed Tairo.”

Lord Ii replied he was not in the position to say aught about such a matter. Lord Ōta of the Cabinet then said:

“His Excellency Lord Kamon (Lord Ii) being a hard-working statesman, there will be no necessity of appointing another Tairo.”

The cutting sarcasm of the remark was apparent, since the office of the Tairo was restricted to one person. But nothing daunted Lord Nariaki taxed Lord Ii with numberless queries. The latter maintained perfect serenity

all along and met each question with wit and promptitude, until at last the whole company was thrown into a convulsion of laughter by the irresistible humour of Lord Manabe, who remarked:

“The founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate deemed it proper to give a special place to three noble branches of the house for evidently some deeply-designed purpose, and it is not for us, his posterity, to add another and render the *Gosanke* to *Goshike*, four houses.” Lord Nariaki would not have joined in the general merriment, had he perceived the meaning of the malicious joker.

At all events it is evident that Lord Nariaki found in the Tairo no easy man to deal with, an old bird, as he was universally allowed to be, and quitted the court in a crest-fallen manner. Then the officials of the court united in congratulating Lord Ii on his victory in the wordy fight. Tairo Lord Ii remained in the court until the small hours of the night. It was a dark, gloomy starless night with a

drizzling rain falling fast. Lord Ii's palanquin was attended by special guards, among whom was the grandfather of Mr. Nakamura, author of "*Ii Tairō to Kaikō.*" Mr. Nakamura says the day dawned soon after he got home.

On the following day the announcement pertaining to the Shogunate heirship was proclaimed. And in August and October following treaties were duly signed with various foreign representatives comprising Curtius (Holland), Poutiatine (Russia), Lord Elgin (Great Britain) and Baron Gros (France). Thus the great problems of Shogunate heirship and foreign commercial treaty were brought to a satisfactory solution, and the political battle in Yedo resulted in the triumph of Lord Ii. But another battle of more delicate nature had to be waged in Kyoto, where Lord Ii's enemies were hard at it, bringing all their influence to bear on the throne against the Tokugawa Government.

CAMPAIGN IN KYOTO.

To be misunderstood is always the lot of great men. Few statesmen were probably more thoroughly misunderstood than Lord Ii. His attitude towards the throne and his foreign policy were ascribed to motives just the reverse of his true ideas.

As told in the first chapter Ii Naosuke in *Umorigi-no-ya* days, was a most enthusiastic student and complete master of the tea ceremony and swordsmanship. The fundamental principles of these arts, as declared by Lord Ii, embraced great ideals of humanity. The fundamental purpose of tea-ceremony was reconciliation, and the ultimate principle of swordsmanship *hoken* or the "keeping of the sword in the scabbard" and therefore peace. He regarded his post of Tairo in the light of the host in a great tea-ceremony, with the whole nation as his guests, and believed that his chief duty was to promote the conciliation and common goodwill of the guests, irrespective of rank or

station; and his policy was guided by the fundamental ideal of swordmanship. Thus conciliation and peace were the guiding stars of his private as well as public action. But judging from the superficial appearances Lord Ii seemed to have willfully sown the seeds of dissention and set at naught the sacred authority of the throne, but whosoever studies his life disinterestedly will not be slow to be convinced that all the turmoil of those days was nothing but a natural consequence of Lord Ii's unflinching loyalty towards the state and throne.

Now that the treaties with the Powers had been signed and their enforcement was to take place in one year, Lord Ii's entire energy was concentrated in securing reconciliation in appearance and at heart between the Tokugawa Government and Imperial Court. In the way of achieving this purpose lay immense obstacles brought there by the intrigue of Lord Ii's enemies.

Immediately the news of the signing the treaty had reached Lord Ii, he

caused a message to be addressed to the Imperial Court laying before it full circumstances attending the event and at the same time sent his confident Yoshitoki to Kyoto to report the full particulars to the chief officials of the Grand Vizier's household. Though it was also decided that Lord Manabe himself be sent to Kyoto to counteract the opposing influence, his departure had to be postponed for one reason or another. The demise of the Shogun, which took place at the time, the visit of Dutch, French and British envoys and many other important events required the presence of Lord Manabe in Yedo. His non-appearance in Kyoto was taken full advantage of, by Lord Ii's enemies. Availing of the temporary absence of the Grand Vizier Prince Hisatada Kujō who was the sole friend in Kyoto of the Yedo Government, the enemy induced the Court councillors to address Imperial messages to the Shogun and the Lord of Mito, disapproving of the opening of the country to foreign intercourse. The Tokugawa Govern-

ment being the sole regent of the Emperor, to send any direct message from the throne to other than the Tokugawa Government was an extraordinary step; besides these messages lacked the seal of the Grand Vizier, Prince Kujō, and the Tokugawa Government did not regard them as representing the true will of the throne.

The situation growing critical, Lord Manabe could no longer delay his departure for Kyoto and set out for the capital with the utmost dispatch. The report of Lord Manabe's departure made the enemy desperate. They at last succeeded in compelling Prince Kujō to tender his resignation. Thus for a time the party antagonistic to the Shogunate Government became the master of situation, and left no stone unturned in thwarting Lord Ii's policy. On arriving in Kyoto Lord Manabe in co-operation with Yoshitoki, fought his way against the formidable hostile influences surrounding the throne. Many a precious life was sacrificed and many

a perilous adventures experienced. At last after a fierce campaign protracting over three months the Tokugawa Government party was crowned with success. Prince Kujō was restored to the post of Grand Vizier and the Imperial message, sanctioning the Shogunate policy vis-a-vis the foreign question was dispatched to the Shogun. An Imperial order retracting the former message dispatched to the Shogunate and Mito clan without Prince Kujō's seal was also issued. Princes Takatsukasa, Konoe, and Sanjo, Imperial councillors, who had sided with the enemies of Lord Ii resigned their posts. During this political battle between the Shogunate Government and their opponents in Kyoto, the one who rendered great services to the Shogunate Government in bringing about their final triumph was none other than Yoshitoki Naganō, Lord Ii's friend, teacher and retainer. It is a pity that this scholar and patriot has not gained the wide public recognition he merits. After the untimely death of Lord Ii Yoshi-

toki had a small wooden tablet made with his master's name inscribed on it, and as long as he lived, carried it close to his heart. He endeavoured hard to carry into effect the unfinished part of the departed lord's plans; but the times were against him, and he was thrown into prison at Hikone for his pains. When brought out to be beheaded, he was asked if he had anything to say. He only took out the tablet and worshipped at it and side he had done the last act of homage to his master and was now ready to be executed. So passed this noble and exemplary samurai. His famous *uta* beginning "Asukagawa" is remembered and admired to this day.

LORD II FALLS VICTIM TO MISGUIDED
ZEALOTS.

While faithful Yoshitoki kept his master constantly informed of the progress of affairs in Kyoto, Lord Ii took the final step for opening the ports. Two questions now presented themselves for solution: one

was the sites of the ports, and the other the dispatch of a minister to Washington.

Kanagawa was no doubt the best suited for the purpose in Yedo Bay, on account of the depth of its water as well as of its convenient situation. No wonder that Commodore Perry urged the opening of this port five years before. At the time, however, the Government desirous of keeping foreigners as afar off Yedo as possible opened Shimoda instead. Soon after a great tidal wave assailed the town of Shimoda, causing a large loss of lives and property. This gave rise to the opinion favouring the establishment of an open port elsewhere. In the course of his negotiations Townsend Harris brought forward this point, and urged the necessity of substituting Shimoda by a port of safer and more convenient situation. He at first proposed Shinagawa, but became later convinced of the superiority of Kanagawa. In September 1858 the time came for deciding the

question one way or another. Harris was in favour of Kanagawa, but Lord Ii preferred the village of Yokohama situated a little way off Kanagawa. The Tairo was guided in this choice by no other motive than to keep the prospective foreign settlement unmolested. For Kanagawa lay on the Tokaido high way and every now and then provincial lords would pass it on their way to and from Yedo, so that if foreign quarters be established there, some untowards incidents might occur to injure international relations. In fact Lord Ii's fears in this respect were well calculated as happened afterward in 1862, when three Britishers (one of them a woman) on horseback were assaulted at Namamugi without provocation by some chauvinistic samurai returning from Yedo, with fatal result to one of them. As it was, the Commissioners of Negotiation reported to Lord Ii on the difficulty of persuading Harris to accept Yokohama instead of Kanagawa, as the American envoy was very firm in his preference for the latter town.

In a long statement descriptive of the progress of negotiations they advised Lord Ii to accede to the proposal of Harris. The Cabinet supported the Commissioners' opinion, but the Tairō alone held his ground.

It may be stated here that while Lord Hotta was at the head of the Cabinet, Lord Ii advised him to dispatch a minister to America, in order that Japan be represented in that country as America was in Japan. Accordingly Lord Hotta promised Harris to send a minister to his country. Harris was agreeably surprised at the announcement and applauded the prudence of the policy. Now that Lord Ii had come to power, he proceeded to carry out the promise. A minister and suit were accordingly appointed, ready to sail for the United States. But a serious turn of events in Kyoto rendered it necessary to postpone the execution of the above measures for a time. It may be recalled, here, that, once in 1859, the Government caused the governor of Shimoda to negotiate with Harris

about the matter, but without any result. The course of events making it inevitable the Government now instructed the Commissioners of Negotiation to ask the American envoy to agree to postponing making any decision on the question of choosing Yokohama as one of the ports to be opened and also the dispatch of the minister to America. Harris consented to the proposal on condition that the Shogunate Government promised to select Kanagawa instead of Yokohama. Now as a matter of fact Yokohama would have made a better port than Kanagawa as it has since proved. It appears, however that Harris preferred the latter, because Yokohama, as it was then, formed only a small fishermen's hamlet, very unconveniently situated, so that foreigners settling there would have either to cross a sea or to come over steep hills in order to communicate with the rest of the country. Besides he seems to have suspected some dark intentions on the part of the Shogunate Government. At any

rate he was ultimately persuaded to make concession so far as to grant time for the conclusion of negotiations till autumn concerning the minister resident question and till June 1859 regarding the decision as to Kanagawa. This agreement was arrived at on the 18th March 1859. Lord Ii saw the futility of further pressing his point. He simply determined to open Yokohama in practice and caused the project to be carried into effect. When the stipulated time for opening tradal intercourse came, the foreign representatives came to Kanagawa, but their merchants preferred to settle at Yokohama on account of the conveniences and accomodations Lord Ii had by that time fully provided there. Thus it was Lord Ii who laid the foundation of Yokohama which to-day stands a grand monument to that great statesman's foresight.

On February 13th, 1860 everything being ready, Shinmi-buzen-no-kami and Muragaki-awaji-no-kami sailed for the United States as the first envoys of Japan to the United States.

The envoys went on board the American warship *Powhatan*, while the latter was accompanied by the Shogunate warship *Kan-rin Maru* under the captainship of Rintaro Katsu (the late Count Awa Katsu. The *Kan-rin Maru* was commanded by Kimura Settsu-no-Kami, Minister of Navy of the Shogunate Government. She carried on board the envoy's suite, among whom was the late Mr. Yukichi Fukuzawa, founder of the Keio-Gijuku School and the *Jiji Shimpō*. This was the first time that Japanese ever traversed the ocean on a warship under the captainship of their own countryman.

One of the long-cherished wishes of Lord Ii had now been actually carried into effect. But when the envoys returned to Japan the Tairo was no more to hear their report.

The agitated condition of Yedo seemed now gradually subsiding, with good relations between the Shogunate Government and the Imperial Court completely restored. Lord Ii, then, turned his attention to the problem

of coast defence. His kinsman Matsudaira Hizennokami being in perfect accord with his programme the Tairo ordered him to draft his scheme and present it to the Government. Hizennokami did as ordered at once. The documents were duly submitted to the Shogunate Court. Before any action had been taken, however, a fearful fate overtook the Tairo and the nation was shaken to its foundation.

March 24th 1860 fell on a great festival day observed by the Shogunate Court. All the daimyos presented themselves at the Court to offer their congratulations. Spring had already dispatched its merry harbingers and nature began to decorate the hills and dales with fragrant cherry blossoms. But on that particular day the sky was overcast and a snowstorm, quite out of season broke out early in the morning. By the time Lord Ii left his mansion for the Court, the whole city of Yedo turned into a world of crystals. The snow was still coming down thick and fast so that one

could scarcely distinguish objects a few yards off. Lord Ii's procession slowly waded its way through the heavily-laid snow. As it came near the Sakurada gate, a band of men with drawn swords suddenly appeared, as if they had sprung from the earth and made straight for Lord Ii's palanquin. The retainers of Lord Ii were totally taken by surprise. They had on them cumbersome rain-coats, and worse still had their swords securely wrapped in clothes. Not until their lord had fallen under the cruel blades of the assassins could they bring themselves up for action. Nevertheless they fought and a fierce struggle ensued. When a few retainers had managed to bring themselves to the palanquin of their master, there lay the head-less and bleeding trunk of Lord Ii. The tragedy was an act of a few moments. Many lives were lost and many men wounded. The beautiful carpet of snow outside the Sakurada gate had turned crimson. Thus ended the busy and glorious career of Tairo.

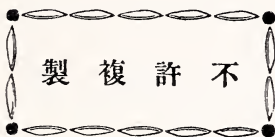
Ii Kamon-no-Kami Naosuke, Lord of Hikone. He was then in his forty-sixth year.

Lord Ii was wont to remark: "I cannot but envy the lot of a man who perishes at the age of forty-five or six, while the world still held him in esteem." One may wonder if he knew that his words would be realised in him? Yes, he did. Early that very morning some unknown party left a letter addressed to Lord Ii inside the front gate of the Ii mansion. After Lord Ii had started on his fatal trip, one of his retainers found the self-same epistle lying in the private chamber of his master. He picked it up and was alarmed to find that its writer warned his lordship to safeguard his person, because some samurai of the Mito clan had recently severed their relations with their master and were after Lord Ii's life. It was usual in those days for samurai bent on some bloody mission to cut all ties binding them to their lord, wives and parents, so that the consequences of their acts might not in-

volve those whom they loved and revered.

Lord Ii certainly had read the message, for it was found open, but did not breathe a word of it to any of his retainers. After his departure, his retainers remaining behind gathered together and were anxiously discussing as to what should be done, when a blood-stained comrade of theirs rushed into their presence and exclaimed: "His Lordship is slain." Thereupon they en masse rushed out barefoot, with their swords unsheathed. But it was too late; on the way they met the palanquin mournfully carrying home the lifeless body of their lord.

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